

THE THEODICY PROBLEM IN THE THEOLOGY

OF JÜRGEN MOLTSMANN

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TO

MY PARENTS

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP:

I certify that the material contained within this dissertation is my own composition, and that the contents reflect the results of my own research, except where explicitly stated otherwise.

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS (Regulation 7.9)

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The thesis is that a theology which takes suffering to be unjustifiable (of which Moltmann's is the major contemporary example), which can openly accept this situation, is potentially a very major break-through. However, it has to be asked if it has a sustainable understanding of the problem of evil.

Introduction: sets out briefly the traditional understanding of the theodicy problem, and also the way in which the thesis is developed.

Chapter one looks at the manner in which theodicy can be seen as a natural and necessary upshot of the fact that Christian belief involves certain assertions or claims. Words, if they are to be meaningful, are used in certain ways. Also discussed is an a-theodacist eschatological verification position. I argue that there has to be a way in which we can rationally affirm that the world is worthwhile.

Chapter two looks at various theodicies to see how they attempt to make sense of the world in its relation to the God who is wholly good, and if they are saying things which Christians need to say - or which are incompatible with basic Christian beliefs.

Chapter three looks at Moltmann's understanding of the theodicy question, leading to the conclusion that there is a major and potentially deeply problematic departure in interpretation.

Chapter four surveys, and then discusses critically, the view of suffering in Theology of Hope.

Chapter five reviews Religion, Revolution and the Future, and Hope and Planning, again in relation to the question of evil.

Chapter six assesses the contribution of The Crucified God to Moltmann's understanding of suffering.

Chapter seven discusses The Trinity and The Kingdom of God likewise.

Chapter eight is a view of crucial aspects of God in Creation and the main-stream theodicy problem.

Chapter nine looks at the idea that Moltmann's theologising may be beyond the reach of conventional theodicy debate criteria. I hold that this is not so. Attention then switches to D Z Phillips and his claims that religious language cannot be subjected to classification as right or wrong: my case being the claim that important aspects of Moltmann's treatment of evil and God are incoherent. I disagree with Phillips.

There follows the conclusion. Whilst Moltmann brings home the need to think with the deepest seriousness about the problems of suffering, and appears to open up a new theological horizon on the problem of evil, he in the end fails to show how one can legitimately escape the criteria of the classical problem of justification.

INTRODUCTION

Theodicy debate traditionally distinguishes two types of evil: physical, and moral.¹ The first category groups together natural afflictions: disease, of which all kinds have been considered problematic, as much for instance the cold which lessens alertness, often dangerous, and bringing physical discomfort, as juvenile Monkey-pox, or the Black Death. Disease includes all those conditions, infective, inherited, degenerative, which are fatal, disabling or debilitating. Either chronic, episodic, or singular. The category of physical evil embraces purposeless pain: that which might be experienced over and above the levels and duration necessary for warning, as say in some terminal illness (although this can of course be defended as causally connected with that which protected in the previous course of life); 'programmed' cell and systems decay, and (in the view of many), the consequent universal mortality. It also includes bodily deformities and disfigurements; accidental injuries; the physical pain/human anguish and/or animal and environmental dislocation caused by earthquake, landslide, hurricane, drought, mass extinction, volcanic eruption, and similar events. The human population 'explosion', with all its potentially destructive consequences, might perhaps be classed under this heading, as a complex natural 'trap' into which a species may fall. Then there is that physical suffering with its origins in evil human action: for Plantinga this is moral evil, but it can also be considered physical. In Plantinga's qualified definition, "[moral evil] roughly, is the evil which results from human choice or volition;... [physical evil] is that which does not" (GAOM p132). I think both positions have something to recommend them. It can be argued that pain of extended duration (as say unrelated to possibilities for eliminating the cause of that pain, as with a fatal wound), even if

resulting from human action, raises the problem of physical evil, suffering, as much as it does that of free will directed towards evil - thus this is simultaneously a question of God's moral status, and whether he can be held to exist, as much as it one of wrong and injurious action. For one might argue that it was within God's power to create a world where there were sentient and insentient beings and where neither kind relied on a sensitivity to external stimuli which could involve unjustifiable agony: that a world where such stimuli are possible, and frequently occur, is a dangerous and cruel world. That God had it at his disposal to create a world which was otherwise; and so on. Additionally included in this first category - physical evil - would be the pain inflicted by predation in 'insentient' animal existence, and the suffering of 'insentient' creatures in sustaining the success of the *imago dei*. For various reasons this could be considered as physical evil (i.e. involving physical suffering, but out of necessity), or both physical and moral evil (i.e. involving physical suffering dependent on moral evil: many human beings have the option not to eat creatures for instance, although this responsibility is mitigated by cultural pressures rooted in past necessity). Most importantly, in both instances, moral evil could arguably be predicated of God, given the crucial belief that God is wholly good - where this is held to imply that God only permits the possibility of such evils as are ultimately/overall something it will be better to have had, than not to have had, through connection with worthwhile goods, and where we believe that such a justification cannot be forwarded. Of course, the moment such accrual was perceived, one would be led to conclude that God, wholly good, does not exist.

The second key category, moral evil, encompasses wrong acts consciously done; those stemming from culpable or human ignorance; or from sincerely

held but mistaken beliefs, or the right not being done (additionally, arising from experience and/or consciousness of both physical and moral evil, their so afflicting others and self, there is what has been termed in a special sense, 'suffering', involving an anguish of being (see G Wallace Philosophy 46, 1971 p349-51).

Together, the constituents of the two classes of evil comprise the basis for a Christian evaluation of the world as radically disordered, or, from the atheist's point of view, as not ordered to coincide with what would be logically expected of the creative work of the Christian God. That is, the latter group see a world in which suffering (in the generally used sense of all the creaturely experience of both moral and physical evil), of many kinds, but crucially, of unjustifiable degree, is present. Clearly, dis-integrative and destructive experience has been seen as having profound implications when it is held that a perfectly good and loving God exists; a creator, omnipotent, omniscient, and free.

The difficulties felt over a long period have crystallised in a range of arguments dealing with the so-called 'problem of evil'. This is a problem traditionally stated in terms of a *prima facie* contradiction, though this contradiction is generally regarded as not arising immediately from the juxtaposition of the two propositions, there is a God, omnipotent and perfectly good, and there is evil, but as requiring a third proposition. It is this alone which can provide the explicit logical link between evil, and divine power and goodness, and which could arguably secure a logical contradiction (Ahern, Mackie, McCloskey, Plantinga).² Thus J L Mackie holds:

It is true that there is no explicit contradiction between the statements that there is an omnipotent and wholly good god and that there is evil. But if we add the at least initially plausible premisses that good is opposed to evil in such a way that a being

who is wholly good eliminates evil as far as he can, and that there are no limits to that an omnipotent being can do, then we do have a contradiction." (MT p150)

There have of course been various attempts to establish fatal contradiction, incompatibility, on the basis of such 'additional' premisses, but whether or not success can be rightly claimed in any particular case will not be a concern of this study.

Demonstration of the compatibility of such premisses perceived as implicit in theism (like those above), with evil as it exists; of the non-problematic nature of the entailments in regard to the permitting or prevention of evil, is the traditionally understood achievement of the theodist. Typically, examination of the problem by those of whom the latter group is comprised, has led to the conclusion that there is only *prima facie* contradiction; evil is compatible with divine goodness, and is in fact enabling or correlative of otherwise unobtainable, necessary and justificatory second-order goods (that is, if they have not been led to the more modest, but still important conclusion that a successful theodicy is a possibility not yet disproved, or to reject the possibility of theodicy).

Thus the problem as debated by atheists and theodists can be said to be that of a threatened logical contradiction, between the nature of the theistic God, what is implicit in it as regards evil, and the existence of evil(s). This understanding of the issues is present in its settings by Epicurus, Augustine, and Aquinas, and others. It is interesting to look at some of the most pointed and concise statements of the problem. That of Epicurus (341-270BC), is regarded as the earliest:

"God either wishes to take away evils and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able; or He is both willing and able. If He is willing and unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if he is able and

unwilling He is malicious which is equally at variance with God; if He is neither willing nor able, He is both willing and able, which is alone suitable to God, from what source then are evils? or why does he not remove them?" (cited by Lactantius, 'On The Anger of God', chapter 13: WANF, vol. 8)

In the Confessions, Augustine asks:

"Where then does evil come from, if God made all things and, because he is good, made them good too? It is true that he is the supreme Good, that he is himself a greater Good than these lesser goods which he created. But the Creator and all his creation are both good. Where then does evil come from?" (Confessions, trans. Pine-Coffin, Penguin, 1961: p138 - Bk.7, Ch.5)

Aquinas suggested:

"1. It seems that there is no God. For if, of two actually exclusive things, one were to exist without limit, the other would cease to exist. But by the word 'God' is implied some limitless good. If God then existed, nobody would ever encounter evil. But evil is encountered in the world. God therefore does not exist." (Summa Theologiae, I, Q2, Art.3, obj.1.)

Hume, in his Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (PtX p198, BMEP 1980)

states:

"EPICURUS'S old questions are yet unanswered. Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?"

Among recent commentators, the problem was presented by J L Mackie on the lines that:

"God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; yet evil exists. There seems to be some contradiction between these three propositions, so that if any two of them were true the third would be false. But at the same time all three are essential parts of most theological positions." ('Evil and Omnipotence', Mind 1955, 64, p200)

M B Ahern describes classic statements such as these as embodying the 'general' problem: is any evil compatible with the existence of a wholly good God? (PE p2ff) He would wish to distinguish this problem from that concerned with the question of the justification of the particular evils we see around us. Ahern is right, insofar as none of the above posings of the question refers to anything other than an abstract conflict of divine goodness and 'evil'. However, for most who are involved in the theodicy

debate, this *prima-facie* contradiction is the stepping stone to a different kind of discussion. Statements such as "where then does evil come from?", or "why does he not remove them [evils]?", are the cue for a whole range of arguments on justification and proportionality of goods and evils. As Ahern himself concludes after a discussion of the 'general' problem: "The notion 'good' does not itself entail that whatever instantiates it could not logically suppose either moral or non-moral evil, or that the good could not be proportionate to the evil. If this is true, there seems to be no way of showing that the conditions [for some evil being justified] could never be met" (PE p31). Ahern's discussion of the issue is concise. Could it be true that evil is sometimes justified by good? In human life and conduct we generally accept that this can be the case. He offers the following summary of human conditions of justification, stating first what cannot, arguably, be justified:

- "(1) Causing evil, either directly or indirectly, disproportionate to the good sought.
- (2) Directly causing moral evil.
- (3) Causing evil, either directly or indirectly, when the good sought could be achieved by the agent without the evil" (PE p29).

Then there is that which can in 'certain conditions' be argued to be justified in its relation to good:

- "(1) Directly causing non-moral evil.
- (2) Not preventing foreseen moral or non-moral evil" (ibid).

And evil can be justified when the following conditions are met, subjective intention also being taken into account:

- "(1) What is done is designed to produce good proportionate to the evil.
- (2) The good cannot be achieved without the evil, in any way possible for the agent.

In some cases a third condition is required:

- (3) The agent has at least the tacit consent of the person who suffers the evil" (ibid).

God is of course a case with special terms. For God, all is possible which is logically possible and compatible with his being wholly good. Taking Ahern's conditions (1) and (2) above, we would have to say of God and evil, that the necessarily "... proportionate good could not be achieved without the evil, in any way that is logically possible for a being of unlimited power" (PE p30). As to the third condition, we could argue that God as creator has a special relationship to human beings, analogous to that between parents and children, and if the first two conditions could conceivably be met, then for the general problem, we would have shown that it is the case that some evil could be compatible with the existence of a wholly good God. Interestingly, the way in which the general problem is met shows (arguably), how transitory any simple and absolute opposition of good and evil will be once we start to investigate the kinds of additional premisses needed to establish the fallaciousness of the compatibility of God and evil.³ Further, the kinds of argument Ahern gives here are central to theodicy as it deals with the specific evils that exist around us. So a probable majority of those involved with the theodicy debate have ended in taking the abstract question as the starting point for a more complex discussion concerning the justifiability of kinds and degrees of evil. For so long as it is accepted that some evil could be justified, or that it can never be shown that any evil is incompatible with the existence of a wholly good creator God, then discussion moves on to look at whether or not specific evils of which we have experience, or can imagine, can be justified.

Qualifying God's goodness and responsibility beyond certain limits, is not, I will argue, an acceptable option for theology. For instance, we

may say God is as good as it is possible to be, or that certain responsibilities for the world devolve upon us. To say that God is not wholly good, or that God's ultimate moral responsibilities have to be qualified because of say, forgetfulness, is contradictory of beliefs at the core of Christianity. Because of the wish to affirm that God is wholly good, the pressures which rise from the idea that evil not be understood to be unintelligible, incompatible with God's perfect goodness, wisdom, and freedom, lead to an alternative of instrumentalism and justifiability, or a radical dualism. Generally it is held that the former option, justification, theodicy, is the only one which can yield a coherent response to the problem of evil: evil perceived as never God's final wish for creation, and as at the same time permitted by an omnipotent or potent, omniscient, and wholly good creator of all. This issue of inter-relationship is at the heart of the debate on the problem of evil. It is arguable that evil, abstracted from the complex and valuable world which we seem to have, cut off from the possibility that it is causally connected with worthwhile goods, is indeed final evidence that the sovereign wholly good God does not exist. Why permit, create, such evil, unless one is evil, or incompetent and flawed, or one has never really been sovereign at all? I think that we can say that the Christian theodicy enterprise exists because the kind of creator God talked about is not thought to be one who permits or gives rise to possibilities for evil and suffering for no reason, but is the supremely moral being for whom such possibilities must have their justifications, be causally connected with possibilities for worthwhile goods otherwise unobtainable.

J L Mackie has argued that if we understand evil such as that it is not opposed to perfect goodness, then we are side-stepping one set of

problems, but entering another associated with the relation of this special use of the term evil to its ordinary usage and meanings (MT p151). This points to a major problem for theodacists, and one which Moltmann is sensitive to. Can we still revile something, a genocide, or a painful disease, and hold that it is a possible feature of existence causally connected to worthwhile goods, without trivialising and rationalising the obscene and incomprehensible? If the theodacist can offer a picture of what it means to say that God is wholly good and creator of the world, but finds that the world is profoundly irrational and indeed unjustifiably wicked, then they will have to accept that their God is not a living God, or that their application of concepts such as goodness to God, is misguided.

John Hick has pointed out that we seem to be faced with a choice between a problematic monism or dualism. He is concerned that an extreme monism be avoided for imposing a harmony on reality: a harmony which disguises the fact that evil is genuinely evil and 'utterly inimical' to the will of God. He also believes that resorting to a strong dualism would pose real problems for understanding the lordship and sovereignty of God. For: "Through his prophets God uncompromisingly attacked greed, cruelty and injustice... and in Christ He... relieved men's bodily diseases, thereby treating natural as well as moral evil as hostile to his purpose" (EGL p22). Yet in Hick's own thought we seem to see here a radical dualism trying to co-exist, impossibly, with monism. That is, until we realise that Hick's attempt to overcome the problem of compatibility involves an integration of the possibilities for evil into a pattern of worthwhile human life and development. Still, the desire to retain the ability to indicate that natural and moral evils are 'hostile to God's purpose', is

a strong one, and central for Moltmann. Tensions exist for the sensitive theodist such as Hick, as we shall see in chapter two.

So it can be argued that there is an important issue here in the problem of evil. The justificatory arguments made by Christians, relating to the world as it is, are based on the conclusion that initial oppositions between divine goodness and evil are *prima facie* only, and that evil can occur, and is possible in a divine creation, where such possibility is towards worthwhile good otherwise unobtainable. Clearly though, theodicy arguments have their critics and opponents. Whilst the so-called general problem may be resolved in abstract terms, the actual evil and suffering in the world with which theodicy mainly deals, or responds to, raises many questions.

I think that are four broad positions with regard to theodicy. These are: [1] atheist anti-theodist (that of critics who offer arguments against theodists, and for the incompatibility of God and world evil); [2] theodist; and [3] what I shall call Christian atheodist, (such as Ahern). Then there is [4] Moltmann, with whose difficult and intriguing position I am principally concerned. The first three have, as we shall see, the common criteria for the coherence of the Christian idea of God that the evil that occurs be capable of justification. Yet they are not the only options available when considering how the relationship of evil to a perfectly good God, and the issue of justification might be approached.

The situation can be schematized in more detail as follows (the numerals refer to the ordering above): [1] Some evil cannot be justified by any of the goods with which its existence may be causally connected: all would

need to be in fact so justifiable, i.e., first order evil through causal connection with possibilities for second order goods, if God, wholly good and omnipotent, creator out of nothing, were to exist; [2] All evil is justifiable, and must be, if God, wholly good and omnipotent exists. It has not yet been shown that such a justifiability of evil is impossible. [3] All the evil that exists, or will exist, should be justifiable if God wholly good and omnipotent is to exist, but we cannot as yet say if this is logically possible/impossible - only eschatological verification is available. [4/ A] All evil can be justified - i.e, is compatible with the existence of a God who is perfectly good; who permits or performs only those things which are in the end better to have been created and enacted. Those which are worthwhile, or not so evil as to indelibly compromise the worthwhile. In this schema it is given that God has foresight, and that evils are causally connected with, and necessary possibilities of, the set of affairs which makes what is good possible itself. Up to this point this is clearly a theodacist stance, predicated on the fundamental nature of the theodicy problem. Crucially, the question of righteousness implies certain beliefs about God which set up an at least *prima facie* contradiction when the suffering of creation is considered. So, if all evil can be justified, this is as it should be if God, wholly good and omnipotent, *or however powerful he may be* exists, and is righteous.

(4/ B) Yet, and this will by normal standards be a case of self-contradiction, all evil cannot be justified, and it should not be for God's sake, given his righteousness and perfection, and for the sake of those who suffered, and whose innocent suffering can never be compensated for. I will explain my reason for setting out this strange juxtaposition below.

First, and quite simply, I will argue this is how Moltmann approaches the theodicy question. It is certainly what is implicit in his stance. The question only exists because of certain beliefs about God, and certain problematic features of his creation. Moltmann, as I will attempt to show, thinks that some evils are unjustifiable, and should not be justified, and holds that God is just. This is what gives us our disconcerting juxtaposition. What does his stance imply? Does it imply that he supports the atheist anti-theodicy in understanding the logic of the justificatory criteria, and understanding that there is evil which cannot be reconciled with God's existence? An evil whose existence is an eternal injustice, which cannot be absorbed by connection with some second order good, or by a causal connection with that which makes possible second order goods? Does he then successfully abandon or by-pass the justice model which makes such assessments possible? Are the criteria of injustice flexible enough to allow one to continue, and to talk about the God who is just? Or does its shadow hang over an entire theology, where Moltmann talks of evil that can never be come to terms with? And if it does, is it not the case that when Moltmann says there is unjustifiable evil, he is inescapably committed to the (seemingly) concomitant belief that God is unjust? That is, is it not the case that one cannot have a significant concept of justice extending to the new creation, without having committed oneself to a thorough-going conception of the unjust and the unjustifiable, with all the consequences? What then is the subject of this thesis? The issue of whether or not Moltmann holds a radical position such as described above, and how he then develops his theology in accordance (or not), and in a way which is coherent, or not (i.e., given that God is wholly good, creator of the universe...).

There are in fact times when we do seem to be dealing with a theodicy of sorts, an integration of evil into God's life which appears to amount to a *de facto* theodicy, if we continue to believe that God is perfectly just. There are always others when the justifiability of evil is denied. This makes for a complex mix, and makes a study of Moltmann and the issues he raises an exploration of some of the fundamental ingredients of the theodicy debate. I conclude that Moltmann's position is ultimately incoherent, with its claims for a righteous God, but one for whom the theodicy principle is anathema. This must not be understood as a purely gratuitous and negative critical move. The claim being contended would if demonstrated as coherent, something we could suppose to be true, overturn conventional thinking on the subject of the problem of evil. It would if accepted mark one of the most important advances in this area of thought: very probably the most important advance. It thus deserves close attention.

In chapter one I shall begin by looking at what R Swinburne says on the use of words. If words are to have some meanings and not others, then there are conditions as to how we use them. The relevance of this to theodicy should then become clear. Next we will come to J L Mackie, whose anti-theodicy arguments are grounded on the kind of understanding of meaning and entailments portrayed so clearly by Swinburne. They are the kinds of argument which stimulate theodicy response, and for apparently good reason. That is, they are arguments which suggest why it is dangerous for Christians to leave theodicy aside. The chapter concludes with a look at M B Ahern, to see how his Christian a-theodicy can be called into question, and what implications this might have for how we look at Moltmann.

The second chapter opens with a discussion of key theistic attributes. It has to be seen in some further detail why critics like J L Mackie are pursuing arguably real, and not phantasmal problems of Christian belief. What is implied in the conventional attributes, vis a vis theodicy? How far are the attributes 'flexible', and what happens if we jettison one or other of them? I then look at a number of theodicy options, asking if they present immoral cases which are blatantly incompatible with the core elements of Christian belief. I conclude by arguing that apparently they do not.

Chapter three is a general survey of Moltmann's thinking on the problem of evil and the issues of theodicy. It precedes a detailed examination of the major Moltmann texts. In each chapter there is an account of the overall development of the text, although with emphasis on the problems of suffering, followed by, or inter-leaved with, a more concentrated discussion on theodicy questions. Chapters four, five, six, seven, and eight follow this pattern. In chapter nine I look at questions of the openness of Moltmann's theology to critical evaluation such as is usual in the field of theodicy debate. The conclusion follows.

The basis of theodicy's concern with justifiability can be set out in the form that God is coherently supposed to be p (omnipotent/potent, omniscient or prescient, supremely wise and perfectly good), only if q - (where the evil that occurs is arguably compatible, or at least not demonstrably incompatible with these attributes). Seeing what is implied in the attributes, what the conditions in 'only if q' are, and why, then looking to see how, and for what reasons, Moltmann's view of theodicy, the righteousness of God, and the injustices done to the sufferer, fares ill or well in respect of its dismissal of this criteria (allowing us, or

failing to allow us to maintain that his picture of God is one we could suppose to be true), is the aim of this study. Is it possible that Swinburne, Mackie, Ahern, and others, are wrong in their arguments for what a coherent God-concept implies? Moltmann's work may be either breaking new ground successfully and without major problems, or failing in certain key respects to escape already well-established areas of difficulty. The particular strengths and weaknesses revealed will point as to how a re-formulation of Moltmann's theology could be gone about. I will not though attempt a detailed re-structuring; the kinds of changes which I would like to see should become evident in the discussion, and I would hope clearly so.

CHAPTER ONE

As an example of the way in which theodicy can begin to be seen as a natural and indeed logical upshot of the fact that traditional and contemporary Christian belief involves certain assertions or claims about God and the world (which are held to be consistent with each other), I have chosen to begin with Richard Swinburne's concise account of the limits to the theological uses of language (see The Coherence of Theism p50ff). In his case it is held that God in Christian faith is omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good, and that the evil that there is in the world is compatible with the existence of such a God. At this stage I do not want to discuss the implications of the attributes themselves in any detail, but the way in which they come to have these implications. The attributes, with I believe, perfect goodness as inescapably paramount for the problem of evil, seem unavoidably to generate the need for a justificatory account of evil through the meaning they carry, and the way in which this appears *prima facie* incompatible with so much of what happens in the world. How is such meaning established? Meaning is given by circumscription, and words, if they are to mean some things, must not mean others. It is for these kinds of reasons that, once their sense has been agreed upon, ideas of power, responsibility, freedom, perfect goodness, and supreme wisdom or prescience, have, at least in conventional usages, tended to sustain the significant problem when suffering and the existence of God is considered.

Here, it is not the range of possible theodicies that is the subject of discussion, but some of the underlying reasons for the necessity of

embarking upon justificatory theodicy at all. In due course the theodicy that Swinburne has developed will be looked at.

Dealing with the problem of evil in his paper for the symposium 'Reason and Religion' (Reason and Religion, p81ff), Swinburne starts with a definition:

"God is... omniscient, omnipotent, and perfectly good. By 'omniscient' I understand 'one who knows all true propositions.' By 'omnipotent' I understand 'able to do anything logically possible.' By 'perfectly good' I understand 'one who does no morally bad action', and I include among actions omissions to perform some action." (ibid)

On the basis of these attributes he goes on to give a brief outline of the problem of evil, which we will come to later. In his book The Coherence of Theism, Swinburne provides a quite detailed discussion of divine attributes. I shall touch upon his treatment of these in chapter two. He also discusses such related issues as what constitutes a statement; why credal sentences are statements; and what is a coherent statement. It is these topics which are looked at below. As we shall see, the problem of evil arises because words have their life in language, and language has rules which give words, and conjunctions of words such as "wholly-" or "perfectly-" "good", certain possibilities regulated by syntactic and semantic factors. It is on this basis that Swinburne and others have come to understand that the God who is wholly good is not one who permits ultimately unjustifiable evils.

In The Coherence of Theism, Swinburne is most concerned with the question of what it means that a God exists: if it makes no sense to suppose that he exists, questions of establishing existence are redundant. Swinburne is sure most people would accept that the concepts of omnipotence, omniscience, and perfect goodness, are coherent, or are

concepts which could be coherently formulated. The sense in which they could be coherent, where we could think of them as being true, can be established through their articulation in language, language not of an overly-stretched analogical type that prevents reasonable proof of coherence being arrived at (see below). But are credal statements such as God is perfect love, claims, statements which we could require to be coherent?

There are a number of conditions for the coherence of statements. Swinburne holds that statements are sentences, strings of words, of a certain kind. Not only are these sentences grammatical, if they are to be meaningful they are also composed of meaningful words. They are as statements, meaningful indicative sentences of the kind that usually make a claim (CT p11). Some meaningful indicative sentences may be performatory, as in "I owe you £10" (this can of course be seen as a claim). Again, others, of the important kind "Capital punishment is wrong", have been thought to make no claim, but simply to convey disapproval. Swinburne on the other hand, thinks a statement of this kind may do this, and may lead people to campaign against capital punishment - but that it will do so in addition to making a claim. He holds that a claim/statement, "unlike anything else expressed by a sentence, is true or false. Commands, questions, or performative utterances are not true or false" (ibid p12). And he argues that not only sentences such as "Capital punishment is wrong" are claims, but credal sentences too. Thus credal sentences are claims about the way things are. People use them in referring to a reality, not simply to express how they feel; nor in some special religious sense where theology "makes no claims about the past history of men or the future experiences of any individual; and no claims

about any supra-sensible reality which explains the observable world"

(ibid p91). It is said:

"Certainly God's love may not be quite like human love, and theists may only use the word 'love' because it is the word nearest in meaning to the word which they would like to use but have not got. But if God's 'love' is not similar to the love of a person, shown by care for well-being, readiness to forgive faults, etc. etc., why talk of love?" (ibid p93)

It is with these words that Swinburne finally rejects D Z Phillips attitudinal approach to theological statements (see esp. p90ff. I shall discuss D Z Phillips in chapter nine, along with the background to Swinburne's criticism). Swinburne argues that: "the vast majority of those who have used religious language have certainly treated the affirmation that God created the world as the confident propounding of a hypothesis explaining its existence." And that "This can be seen by the fact that they have abandoned their faith if they have come to believe that 'matter alone exists' or there is nothing beyond the Universe and the people in it' or some such claim" (ibid p92). Swinburne's contention that credal sentences make claims, or that certain credal sentences will have to be seen to do so, if traditional belief is to continue, is, I believe, one that would be widely accepted.'

Statements making a claim can be coherent or incoherent. That is, there are those we can conceive of, along with any statements entailed, as being true, and those which we cannot (and a Christian credal utterance is one we would expect to be true). There are some basic procedures for establishing the coherence of a statement. Tests on freedom from self-contradiction/the illogicality of the denial of an entailment. Thus, for instance, "a statement p entails another statement q if and only if p and negation of q are inconsistent" (ibid p13). A standard example of this is "all men are mortal" entailing that all Englishmen are mortal.

It is clearly inconsistent to hold that if the former is true, then some Englishmen are not mortal. Hence: "If a statement p entails another statement q, then a man who asserts that p is committed also to the claim that q; the claim that q lies buried within the claim that p." (ibid: of perfect goodness one could thus argue for the entailment that God never performs any morally bad actions). A statement and its entailments may be coherent (logically possible), even if it is false. However, it cannot make sense to say of an incoherent statement that it might be true (it is with this threat in mind that we can argue that accepting that God is perfectly good and just, and performs, or permits, or enables inalienably evil choices or happenings which are unjustifiable, is to commit oneself to an intellectually untenable position). It can also be added that clearly self-contradictory statements are by nature incoherent, although not all incoherent statements are blatantly self-contradictory (i.e, they do not explicitly say something is so, and, it is not so). If then we take a coherent statement to be one that it makes sense to suppose might be true, are there formal criteria of proof of coherence? Swinburne discusses this in chapter three of The Coherence of Theism.

Detailed consideration is given to this issue of the proof or disproofs of coherence (CT p30ff). One fundamental point is that the coherence of a statement cannot be grounded on whether or not its entailments are coherent (there are an infinite number of entailments which are not incoherent even if the statement is, i.e., a square has five sides is incoherent - but this entails that some squares have sides, which is coherent). One can turn to the proof of showing that statement p is already entailed by r, where r is a coherent statement. Deductive proof from r to p offers a way of approaching agreed grounds for coherence - although the assumption has to be made, or if necessary clarified through

reference to further propositions (only perhaps) finally mutually agreed as themselves coherent, that r itself is coherent. Or some other proposition from which p is arguably entailed might be tried (ibid p39).

Swinburne's discussion of the theological use of words is clear. It demonstrates that use of such terms as omnipotence and perfect goodness, if they are to be made sense of at all (and it seems they can be - see chapter two), must not involve stretching language to the point where it is useless to think of what it might be for them to be true,^{or} fatally compromise attempts to understand what their entailments would be. What kinds of meanings then can words have within a meaningful indicative sentence? (CT p31) They can be used either in their normal senses, or with a new meaning given through new syntactic and/or semantic rules (ibid). Syntactic rules governing the use of a word may operate through verbal definition, or description of function and/or restrictions on use. Semantic rules indicate or coherently describe examples of objects/kinds of objects to which a term may/may not apply, or conditions for its use in a sentence (ibid p32). If a word is not being used in its normal sense, it must be a word "whose meaning is explained by means of ordinary words or observable phenomenon" (ibid). Words are meaningful if they are used in language; they become meaningful when a use is given them by syntactic or semantic procedures. It is held: "A word is vague if the rules do not give clear guidance on use; a word is ambiguous if there are two distinct sets of rules for its use" (CT p36). Will either of these problems viciously beset ideas of omnipotence/ potence, omniscience/ prescience, and perfect goodness? This seems unlikely. There are for instance arguably clear parameters as to how perfect goodness could be understood: clear enough to make theodicy an apparently inescapable obligation (see chapter two).

Swinburne first looks at words used in their ordinary sense. In talk about God, the theologian will recognise that words retaining their normal sense are used in a way in which the ordinary properties denoted are "manifested in unusual combinations and circumstances and to unusual degrees" (CT p51). There are limits to whether all properties can be coherently posited to co-exist, nor are all properties to be conceived of as existing to any degree. Still, whilst maintaining that good is used theologically in its normal sense, Swinburne will not deny that 'good' said of God and of Florence Nightingale is something widely different. However, it is not used in a 'new' or analogical sense.

Using words in a new sense (CT p54f), will not imply, if our statements are still to be meaningful, that they are given entirely new senses. For "There is more in common between 'wisdom' attributed to God and 'wisdom' attributed to man, than there is between 'wisdom' attributed to God and 'folly' or 'weighing ten stone' to man" (CT p55). As has been stated, such new senses require amendment of the syntactical and/or semantic rules applying to old words. Swinburne rejects two suggestions as to the way in which such new senses are provided. First, the private and peculiar experience of the believer (most believers do not have such peculiar experiences as require/demand radically new senses), and secondly, the believer giving public examples of new applications: "The theist never gives you any other public examples of 'persons' other than those which we would normally call 'persons', of 'good' deeds other than those which we would normally call 'good'" (CT p57). When applied to God though, words such as 'person' are being used in a 'wider' sense than before. The meaning is 'loosened' or 'extended.' The semantic rules say for a property W may be changed to allow the new sense 'W' to apply to a wider range of phenomenon. Thus:

"an object is correctly called 'W' if it resembles the standard examples of W objects in the respect in which they resemble each other, either as much as they resemble each other or more than it resembles standard examples of objects which are not W." (CT p58)

However, in this case syntactic rules also require modification (rules of the kind that a loud noise cannot be soft) if the new use is not to be over-tied to the relations of the old use. That is, say that an object is a 'W', and if so an 'X' - and if 'X', either 'Y' or 'not - Z.' If the semantic rules (relating to standard examples) for 'Y' and 'not - Z' are not changed, and neither are the syntactic rules for 'W', then: "although the new semantic rules for 'W' might by themselves allow various objects rightly to be called 'W' which were not so called before, nevertheless by the semantic rules for 'Y' and 'Z' those objects might count as 'Z and not - Y'" (CT p59). What is new that is let in by the change in semantic rules for 'W', may be excluded by unchanged syntactic ones, and so on. The process can be complex. The more rules are modified, the more widely a term can be applied. Thus sentences previously incoherent may become coherent. The opposite may also be the case (CT p61 - and for a term to have coherence the original sense should have been applicable to some object, and the new one not be applicable to all). With these analogical senses, proofs of coherence or incoherence are difficult to obtain, for if one loosens the syntactic rule it is harder to deduce a specific conclusion from, as Swinburne puts it: "... a statement expressed by a sentence which contains the word, or to deduce from some other statement a statement expressed by a sentence containing this word" (CT p61). With loosened semantic rules, if one says something is rightly termed 'W' despite its not resembling standard objects to the extent that they resemble each other, but resembling them more than it does other objects non-'W', then it is difficult to know what an object or property W of which we have no experience might be. It might be coherent to say of such

an object or property that it can be both W and P, or that W excludes P. To establish coherence of a statement we need to refer to some other coherent statement - but if the links between standard examples and 'W' are loose, and in fact 'W' is greatly dissimilar, then "it becomes unclear what suppositions about things which are W* (viz. things correctly called 'W' in the new use of this term) are evidently coherent" (CT p62). Thus it can be highly problematic if we resort frequently to analogical language and loosen the rules beyond certain limits.²

Swinburne attempts to show which aspects of theism can be regarded as describable using only ordinary senses of words (as in 'good' where it is used of God in an ordinary sense, although 'good' of a degree not found in 'mundane' objects), and which, if they are to be coherent, in an analogical sense (i.e., that God is a person).³ I shall not follow this discussion, and I leave Swinburne's follow up to his thinking on the theological use of language - his outline theodicy, and to a lesser extent, his handling of the attributes, until chapter two. It remains to say that his account of this aspect of the use of words is one with which I agree.

We have seen what Swinburne understands as the basic conditions for meaningful use of language, and that he thinks credal utterances are statements making claims. We move now to look at some of the arguments on the problem of evil forwarded by J L Mackie. Mackie is an example of the way in which atheist anti-theodicists typically argue very much from the philosophical basis of the theodicy problem. The kinds of arguments which he advances are not new, but they are presented with clarity, and even apparently slight refinements may be very significant. In the introduction I attempted to outline why there was a 'problem of evil'. It

seemed to rest on fundamental tenets of belief being in *prima facie* conflict (i.e., there is a wholly good God; the world is marked by great suffering: how can these apparently opposing, indeed incompatible factors be reconciled?). In fact J L Mackie's arguments represent the type of critical case being made on fairly widespread readings of what is involved in Christian belief, and on how we can go about resolving such issues. The way in which he views theological/philosophical concepts in his critique of theodicy defences, is based on the idea that we cannot dilute the meaning (and so loosen the entailments), of our terms beyond certain limits. We can see what Swinburne has described, applied, or

'in the flesh', and as it relates to our problem. Even before looking in any detail at the attributes and their implications, it is evident that meaning and coherence have an apparently central place in talk of God, goodness, and evil. I do not intend to argue over whether or not Mackie's case is definitive evidence of incoherence in Christian belief. We could say he shows that certain kinds of belief held by Christians are incoherent. He did not make a claim to have shown ultimate incoherence in Christian belief, and my interest here lies more in the kinds of argument that are used, and why.

I have already given one of Mackie's formulations of the problem of evil. He thinks it a problem which at least seems to show that traditional theism is 'positively irrational' in that some of the pivotal doctrines are inconsistent as a set (MT p150). It is, he argues, a logical problem, not to be solved by practical action, or by discoveries of the kind we might hope for in science. Thus the theodicy of a necessary contrast good/evil (i.e. good requires evil in order to be seen as good) can be refuted by clear steps. If a property is truly universal it is possible that it might not be picked out in any language

by a predicate, rather less plausibly, it might not even be noticed. But it is not plausible that if nothing lacked a certain property, then that property would cease to exist. And even if we grant the principle of contrast or necessary counterpart, why need evil be present in more than the logically necessary minute quantities? Of course, we might want to question Mackie's argument here. We could say that all sentient creatures, for instance, express a particular kind of goodness. They are free in some important and worthwhile way. They are free to choose other than the good, and they do.

Of more direct interest for mainstream justificatory theodicy are the three arguments advanced on pp152-156 of The Miracle of Theism. These are as follows. First, we can help justify evil by saying that it is a necessary means to the good. This seems reasonable, since human agents tend to think that they learn from their mistakes, and so improve. Likewise animals suffer pain, but pain helps protect and warn; and where pain does not fulfill these functions it is usually causally connected with that which is 'beneficial'. Yet Mackie rejects this as a theodicy argument. It is, he claims, irrelevant, applying only to beings limited by "independently existing causal laws". We put up with evil for the sake of the good that comes from it. However, God is not such an agent. As omnipotent, God should have power over causal laws; he made them. God does not need to use means to attain an end (MT p153). Mackie's conclusion may seem over-hasty, excluding Irenaean or free will theodicies, and even a theology of creation, but even so, it is arguable that even if God wants humans to develop within a certain limiting framework, and with freedom, neither of these factors can satisfactorily explain why there is the evil that there is: given that God is omnipotent, omniscient, and perfectly good. For if God does employ means

to an end, such as endowing finite agents with free will, in order that they may freely love him and each other (or is this an end in itself?), those means which might be compatible with his nature may be overshadowed by realities which are not. Mackie, as will be seen, holds this position.

He now turns to a second theodicy argument; that evil may be a "contributory factor to the good of an organic whole". This argument can take the form of an aesthetic analogy (as in the contrasts in a piece of music) or that of a Kantian progression towards the good, where this is better than the goods' unalloyed sovereignty. Physical evil is the main object of concern in this approach, and it can be argued that physical afflictions make possible such goods as heroism, the "struggles" of doctors, and so on. Mackie puts the argument in the following terms. If evils be called first order evils, and happiness and pleasure first order goods, then there are second order goods which arise out of first order evils (where these exist as a vital component); out of an "organic whole". First order evils are in fact logically necessary for the existence of second order goods. Good may be the decrease of first order evil and the increase of first order good, or, for instance, the sympathy expressed for those who are suffering. The argument works by showing that even if God could eliminate evils, it is not logically possible for him to do so and obtain such second order goods. But does this really convince? That is, are all the evils that exist, absorbed evils? Mackie advances the plausible argument that there are surplus first order evils, and furthermore, that there are second order evils equivalent to second order goods (such as sympathy) - i.e., "malevolence, cruelty, callousness", and so on. The problem remains therefore, that there are unabsorbed evils.

The third argument⁴ is perhaps the best known and most important, the free will defence (MT pp155ff). Mackie formulates it as unabsorbed evils existing solely because of the bad choices of human free will. But why give creatures a freedom they could misuse? It seems that this free will will have to be a higher third order good which outweighs the evil that can be its consequence, or that it at least outweighs the evils foreseeable by God when he bestowed it; or that it is logically necessary for other third order goods. Of bad choices freely made, it could be said that "neither they nor their effects can be ascribed to God". Still, it needs to be maintained of such beings that the good of their freedom outweighs their bad choices and consequent evils - such that "a god might reasonably choose to create such beings and leave them free" (ibid). Mackie thinks the free will defence the only one which offers hope of a solution to the problem of evil. It has valuable characteristics; it is the argument which allows the theist to accept that there are some unabsorbed evils: "some items which the world would, from however broad and ultimate a perspective, be better without (so that this is *not* the best of all possible worlds). And:

"yet at the same time to detach their occurrence from God, to show them as not having been chosen by God, who none the less seems to have been given a reason, compatible with his complete goodness and omnipotence, and perhaps with his omniscience too, for bringing about the state of affairs from which they arise and for allowing them to occur." (MT p156)

So central does Mackie consider the free will defence that he devotes the bulk of the rest of his discussion to examining it. The remainder deals with some other theodicy arguments, and I will look at these briefly before returning to the critique of the free will defence.

It can be said that God's good is not ours. His goodness is not intelligible on the criteria of human goodness. But here, arguably, good is being stripped of its meaning and has become viciously honorific. Thus John Stuart Mill's father regarded religion as inimical to morality: God is called good, but in description is bad - sometimes "childish", a "petulant tyrant" or "mischievous." In fact, ascribed such motives, it could be argued that God's omnipotence is of a kind compatible with what would normally be termed evils. Using the argument "God's good is not ours", is to abandon the substance of the belief that God is omnipotent, omniscient AND wholly good (MT p56).

Another approach could be that it is wrong to minimise evil, because it is crucial for faith (MT p157). Thus some of the deepest believers have emphasised the realities of evil, whilst not seeking to offer a theodicy. However, whilst it may be true that religion depends on the existence of evil, is this, asks Mackie, a fact which resolves the problem of its (evils) existence? Hume's Demea argued as follows: "'This world is but a point in comparison of eternity... The present evil phenomena, therefore, are rectified in other regions, and in some future period of existence....[my abbvtnl]." (Dialogues bk X: MT ibid)) This is certainly one way of neutralising the emphasis on evil, although not of great help if one is trying to infer the attributes and existence of a God.⁵ Even if at some remote time there is a future life of incomparable bliss, this in itself would fail to explain how those evils that have occurred have done so in a way compatible with the central tenets of theism.

What of the suggestion that sinfulness is necessary for redemption and/or for our realisation that we are utterly dependent on God? (MT p158) Mackie holds that God's omnipotence excludes the possibility that he uses

"deplorable means" to obtain his ends. The more convincing argument he feels, is that which says 'soberly', that sin plus repentance is better as an organic whole than sinlessness (MT p159). Thus of the parable of the prodigal son, whilst he questions the likelihood that a father would prefer a prodigal son rather than constantly good children, he thinks this something humanly comprehensible. What is more difficult, is accepting that such thinking can be transferred to an omniscient God (we may also ask to what extent a figure like Hitler might fit into the type of the prodigal).

Rolf Gruner (Theology 83 p416-24) has argued that evil can be circumvented as a problem by demonstrating that it is incoherent for the sceptic to demand a world free from evil. Mackie suggests that this is a mis-representation. The sceptic is not making a request for a world free from evil, but enquiring whether an "apparent inconsistency" can be cured (MT p159). Whilst it is reasonable to suppose that a world, unlike God, would be limited, and have what might be seen as deficiencies, it is not demonstrated that unabsorbed evils in such a world would be compatible with God's nature. Mackie states: "Gruner clearly thinks it is paradoxical that 'Christianity depends on the very fact which is said to disprove it'. There is indeed a paradox here, but it lies squarely within orthodox theism" (MT p157).

The paradox of omnipotence⁶ presents an interesting problem, but although Mackie argues that it still suggests difficulties for theism (MT p162; and see chapter two), he turns to the free will defence granting the notion that it is coherent for an omnipotent God to create free creatures, beings whose actions he cannot control. What does the defence involve? Distinguishing physical from moral evils shows that some

natural evils are partly the result of human wickedness such as cruelty. However, whilst there must be something of natural evil in the provision of opportunities and conditions for such deeds, the great majority of natural evils are unconnected with human choice - and thus it seems that they cannot be answered for in the free will defence. Plantinga has argued that fallen angels are responsible, but whilst possible, it is an arbitrary supposition which cannot give positive support (we may also note that problems with the free will defence apply to angels as well as to people). Mackie makes an important point; that the demarcation between moral and natural evil is often unclear. There are, he argues, "conflict traps":

"There are *circumstances of injustice*: situations in which peoples are led to the extremes of inhumanity by steps each of which seems reasonable or even unavoidable. These circumstances of injustice are, therefore, an important variety of natural evils which are constantly intertwined with moral ones." (MT p163)

Plantinga's angels could therefore be given the discredit for more than he has reckoned. If the free will defence is to succeed, it must cover natural evils. Mackie argues that it does not do this, but sets this problem aside to examine the defence in its reference to human evils alone (MT p164ff). Does God know beforehand, when creating people with free will, what choices (or kinds of choices) they will make/are likely to make? If yes, it follows (in the case of the proponent of the free will defence), that it is better people can choose freely and sometimes err, than that they are "innocent automata" whose actions are wholly determined. But are these the only alternatives? For:

"If God has made men such that in their free choices they sometimes prefer what is good and what is evil, why could he not have made them such that they always freely choose the good?" (ibid)

It appears that there is no reason for an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good God not to prefer this alternative. If this is so, the theist who rejects it, and who acknowledges that people make "bad free choices",

is taking up an untenable position. Difficulties arise too where the theist looks forward to heaven or a new earth. There created beings always freely chose the good: "If such a state of affairs is coherent enough to be the object of a reasonable hope or faith, it is hard to explain why it does not obtain already" (ibid).

Is it incoherent to suppose that people could be such that they would always freely choose the good?⁷ Mackie thinks not. It would be incoherent though to compel people to freely choose the good. It might be objected that beings who would always freely choose the good would be free from temptation and without the moral value of resisting it? Let us say that there could be either agents of free will and an innocent inclination, or free agents with good and bad inclinations, yet who always control such inclinations. Whichever ideal might be chosen by the theist, in reality neither is instantiated. What then of the logical impossibility of God's creating people who always freely choose the good? (MT p165) Some have argued that freedom entails that what is done freely must on occasion not be done. This rests on the premiss that freedom entails variation. This is problematic if freedom is thought to be a higher good which outweighs the evil of bad actions. If freedom "definitionally" involves variation, then it cannot be such a higher good. For, arguably: "What special value could there conceivably be in the variation between good and bad choices as such?" (MT p166) Moreover, of any notion of freedom in the free will defence, it must not be logically impossible that "all men should always freely choose the good; and, as we know, it is only logical possibility that matters here" (ibid). Is it though a logical impossibility that all persons be "such that" they always freely choose the good? The answer to this depends on whether the compatibilist or incompatibilist position is held. The compatibilist sees choices stemming

from what we are antecedently (determinist); that they are free from external constraints which could make their actions dependent on that which is other than their natures. The argument runs:

"So what a determinist calls free choices flow determinedly from the nature of the agent, and it follows that if it is possible that men should always freely choose the good, it must equally be possible that they be such that they do so." (MT p166)

However, if compatibilism is rejected, this last step becomes debateable. What then of libertarian incompatibilism? What is the evidence for it, and what might contra-causal choice be? In an interesting discussion Mackie concludes finally that there is no conclusive evidence for freedom from antecedent causation in choice, nor any for causal determinism (MT p168). Yet if actions may not be caused, how else might they be described? They may be purely random; or random within limits; or represent events subject only to statistical laws. But is randomness of such a value that it outweighs the badness of bad choices? Freedom can also be doing what one wishes, without constraint or duress; acting in a certain way because it is valued; choosing without neurotic compulsion; acting rationally. These freedoms are however, compatible with the determinist position. Perhaps one of the reasons why compatibilism is disliked is because it is suspected that "there is a real me, distinct from the one that is believed to have a causal history" (MT p170). But again, how would such an "extra-causal" self operate? Kant's idea that the freedom of rational beings arises from their being able to function as such without determination from external causes, together with his argument that "we cannot possibly conceive of a reason as being consciously directed from outside in regard to its judgements" also fails to show how being induced to believe in the wrong kinds of way renders the following crucial argument invalid: "a serious practical judgement

does not need either to be or to see itself as uncaused; it needs merely to see itself as not being improperly caused" (MT p173).²⁰

Here we have reached the concluding section of Mackie's discussion. The point has been reached where it can be said that it is not logically impossible "that men should be such that they always freely choose the good" (MT p172). Is it a logical possibility that God might create them so? Yes, if he is omnipotent and omniscient. If one objects that to have a created nature is to compromise one's freedom, then what is it for God to leave natures to arise from nowhere? Such a freedom has an arguably "obscure" value. If Mackie's contention be accepted, then the conventional free will defences fail to explain ^{of evil} the presence in a world with a perfect creator. If free will defenders seek to satisfactorily explain unabsorbed evils, then they have not succeeded.

Mackie concludes with a final look at the free will defence in an adjusted form. If there is a kind of freedom in which it is valuable that an agent's choice not be antecedently caused, and even an omniscient God cannot know what will be chosen, this places very severe limitations on God (a God with modified omniscience). He could not foresee in 1935 the tragic events of the next 20 years, and he knows little more than we do about the final decades of this century. If he cannot have known what Adam and Eve would do, he still would surely have known what they might do (this is compatible with extreme libertarianism). In this case he took a great risk in creating. Is the value of the freedom to make unforeseeable choices so great that it outweighs the possibility that people might have acted more wickedly than they actually have? God has not knowingly produced evil, but is guilty of gross negligence. Mackie concludes that all forms of the free will defence fail (MT p176), and

that the only path for the theist lies in adjusting the doctrines of theism, without giving up something central. This is not established as impossible, even if we think it unlikely.

Mackie presents strong arguments. They are developments of those which have had a perennial importance in theodicy debate. Crucially for us, they are arguments founded on a certain implicit understanding of how we use words in theology and elsewhere. Words gain meaning through circumscription, and meaning some things, and not others, they have key entailments. The consequence of this is that if theologians or others dilute meaning beyond certain limits, there is loss of meaning, entailments are vague, those with relevance to the theodicy problem say, are impossible to secure. We cannot say what a statement means; we cannot hold that it is coherent, something we could suppose to be true. This would be disastrous for such beliefs as 'God is wholly good'. But in fact, Mackie thinks that there clearly are various intelligible beliefs in Christianity which we can test to see if they are consistent as a set - since they have certain entailments.

By this stage it should be apparent that there is a good case for the incoherence of a faith which, for example, abandons certain attributes: one which might say that God is wholly righteous but not perfectly good, or supremely wise and prescient, but not free from mistakes and miscalculation. Such attributes as divine moral perfection are not optional in the theodicy debate if it is to be a real one. At this point it seems arguably self-evident that only a theism of a certain kind can generate the theodicy problem, and that justification of evil is its only solution. Mackie's arguments throw light on the kinds of difficulties facing theodacists who think that a coherent concept of perfect goodness

is central to Christianity: that it has certain entailments which include the condition that the wholly good God only permits evil that is ultimately justifiable. At the very least he shows, from one side of the theodicy debate, how certain major issues are identified and seen as needing to be addressed in specific ways. One need not accept that his particular formulations of problems are the definitives in order to recognise this. What is crucial is that there are vital core questions which are seen as rational and legitimate, and apparently inescapable minimum criteria for success in meeting them.

I now turn to M B Ahern. My interest is in his argument that the theodicy question cannot be resolved prior to the eschaton. The relevance of this issue, or the conclusions that can be made about it, for a study on Moltmann, is that if it can be shown that Moltmann should modify his position on theodicy, he will have to enter the conventional debate fully. That is, he will not be able to say that there is a great problem in showing how exactly evil is justifiable (even though we believe it to be justifiable), one so difficult that we must be content to leave the answer to God and the future.

To the arguments of Ahern (The Problem of Evil - M B Ahern, RKP 1971). His division of labour follows the sequence: (1) The general/traditional problem - is it true that God's existence is compatible with any evil? (PE p22ff); (2) The specific abstract problems - is it true that God's existence is compatible with specific evils? (PE p43ff); (3) The specific concrete problems - is it the case that the conditions for the compatibility between specific evils and God's existing are met with reality? (PE p53ff) To the last he answers that he thinks it impossible this side of an eschaton, to answer yes or no. Whether his position is

sustainable here is the real significance of his position, *vis a vis* the atheist anti-theodacists, and the possibilities for theodacists.

Fundamental is his holding that the problem of evil is one where the issue of compatibility between God's existence and that of evil is alive on the basis of the threat of logical incompatibility, and that the Christian solution lies in the justification of evil. Yet more important is this claim that this issue cannot have a pre-eschaton resolution. Naturally, if we examine Ahern's position on delayed verification, we find that it is hardly compatible with Moltmann, since he (Ahern) is committed to arguing (falsely, given his own suppositions: see below) that if God exists, then all the evil that has occurred is necessarily justified (because of what is entailed in being wholly good: PE p75). This attachment to justification is what binds him to Swinburne and Mackie. But he would probably receive little support from them for his putting the resolution of such issues beyond the reach of finite reason, and expecting it to be logically necessary that if a 'God' exists, this must be the perfectly good God so widely hoped for. This does not follow at all.

It is possible to argue that God's supposed moral perfection can never be known by beings whose reasoning is inadequate to know, concretely, what would constitute an irredeemable evil. To say that God's existing would be evidence that all evil is justified is to beg the question of how one knows that the God who exists is morally perfect, omnipotent, and wholly wise: to argue that reason would be empowered to know this, raises the important question of the morality of a presently disempowered reason, and of human identity. And that an empowered reason would have the necessary understanding of this situation (yet one that is arguably

only consistent with an infinite being), is again problematic: ultimate inter-connections, as Ahern supposes, can only be made in the ^{divine} ^ mind, and no human would claim to be like God, even as a finite immortal. Thus he argues:

"We can know neither all of the world's evil, all of the world's good, nor the connections, if any, between the good and evil. Hence it will never be possible to devise a theory to justify all evil which can be shown to be true... It is no argument against theism that it is unable to do what cannot be done." (PE p71)

Is it then something other than reason that could help us to 'know' ^{wholly good?} God is ^ Will we feel or sense that God is wholly good and omnipotent, much, in respect of perception of justice and right, as children in the pain of the scolding, feel (wrongly) with immediacy that they are wholly unloved? Or is it more 'rational' than that? Can it be simply trust, and a freedom from all previous evil, from any evil at all, which convinces: or is this inadequate? For if this state of new life were subsequent to even necessary suffering (suffering necessary to reach this particular reality), and its supposed justification, could we (being irredeemably finite) ever really cease to doubt the morality of the unique, 'wholly good' act of creation. That is, knowing the suffering of sentient and insentient life, and that emotion in itself is incomplete as human fulfilment; that unconditional joy for the resurrected from the ashes of Dachau, and the lime pits of 'King Cholera', is not fully conceivable without understanding. Humanly, the two should go together (emotion and understanding). Further problems arise for his theodicy case, when Ahern seems to accept that there are good philosophical reasons for questioning the concept of life after death, but these are not of relevance here (PE p73).

So, given the above, if the criterion of justifiable evil is accepted, is it not mistaken to assume as Ahern does, that its actual satisfaction,

its working, would not ever be accessible to finite beings, if such a wholly good God existed? Would a wholly good, omniscient and omnipotent God create contingent beings who can only know that for all the suffering of the world, that there might be a divinely-alone comprehended, omni-justificatory necessary inter-connectedness between evil and surpassing good, or a god not morally perfect or omnipotent; creatures who can only guess at a necessity for unabsorbable/unjustifiable evils, at a rationale? Or what if there is no necessity? (the incoherence of this last option suggests the difficulties related to a non-justificatory view of evil). There are I think, real problems for Ahern, following from the arguments of p74-75 of The Problem of Evil,⁹ and unless the problem of evil is to vanish, presumably along with concepts such as moral perfection, a requirement to examine the possibility of theodicy; to establish concrete conditions of fulfilment on terms open to finite comprehension, and to recognise the challenge of atheist critique on the subject of absorbed evil. Ahern is familiar with the arguments of figures like J L Mackie and H J McCloskey, and accepts that they show "convincingly that none of the solutions theists commonly offer satisfactorily solves all of the problems" (PE p72). He argues though that it is impossible for non-theists to demonstrate that the evil that occurs is not justified. This is because:

"To show that actual evil is not justified, it would be necessary to establish a negative fact, namely, that good which could justify it will never exist. This cannot be done without exhaustive knowledge of the world's good which is not available to us." (ibid)

But is it necessary to compile an exhaustive account of the world's good on the part of the non-theist? Neither an exhaustive account of good or evil is required. What is important here for the non-theist is the inability of finite beings to comprehend the nature of the interplay of good and evil, to ever understand the sense of their suffering and joyful

existence to the point where the possibility that God does not exist, or is flawed, is excluded: to ever feel able that they can affirm, that, from the Christian evaluation of our experience, the world and existence in it, are fundamentally worthwhile. This is in fact an argument against the existence of a wholly good God.

It may appear absurd that the 'fate' of God is apparently being decided in these grounds. However, there would be no theodicy debate if it were universally self-evident that a wholly good God's existence is compatible with the evil that there is. One would merely have to indicate casually the way in which the earth is so clearly characterised by good proportionate to the evil. But we cannot do this. If it is not shown to be impossible that there is a humanly accessible case which establishes that the evil around us can be compatible with a wholly good God's existing, one especially for which there is no defeater argument, then, given that the latter arguably *must* be the case if we are to ever know that God *is*, or rather, could be wholly good, we should explore, argue, and counter-argue. Again, the simple fact that we may be confronted by arguments which make mainstream Christian positions on evil untenable, or hold that the question of evil is utterly beyond us, should not lead to resigned and false hopes of eschatological verification, but to finding ways of showing that it is possible to say that Christian belief on God and evil is coherent, and that we can secure compatibility against defeat (although there is a further problem: we can hardly know the intentions of this 'god', nor all that has been in the past, or might be in the future. Perhaps this is a suitable place for trust to overcome any doubts - see the discussion of Meynell).

In this chapter I have attempted to follow up the initial outline of the problem by looking at some of the fundamental reasons why it exists, and takes the form it does. Swinburne and Mackie illustrate an apparently rational sequence - from basic concerns about meaning and entailments, to the kind of argument which is met with in theodicy discussion: an example of Swinburne's understanding of use of words in practice. Looking at the issues raised by Ahern has shown that *if* we come to accept that the justifiability of evil is an entailment of holding that God is wholly good, then we cannot emphasise the grotesque suffering that occurs in the world, without being prepared to discuss how it is compatible with the existence of such a God. To defer to eschatological verification on the grounds that we do not like to compromise our faith with rationality in the face of the mysterious infinite, that the infinite alone can comprehend such matters, is not, I believe, a sustainable position. The need for vigorous defence of belief from the threat of what some see as increasingly effective criticism of established Christian positions, and the question of integrity when we are aware that the intellect is attempting to hold together contradictory thought and desire, mean that the exploration of the issues in theodicy debate cannot be quietly ignored.

CHAPTER TWO

The understanding that terms such as goodness, knowledge, and power are used in a way whose meaning can be imagined without resort to lengthy and complex analogical procedures is implicit in the discussion which follows.¹ They are nevertheless words whose implications require clarification if we are to understand their role in generating the theodicy debate. We now look briefly at the three divine attributes which figure so prominently in the traditional theodicy question. How might they lead us to ascribe to the principle of the justification of evil?

As part of the framework for discussion, I make reference to some of Swinburne and Mackie's positions. The discussion of attributes will be followed by an examination of a number of theodicy positions. The objective is stated at the beginning of that section.

OMNIPOTENCE/DIVINE POWER:

Swinburne's modified account of omnipotence arises from discussion of such questions as the paradox of the stone (CT p152ff).² For Moltmann's model of theism, its relevance lies in its demonstration that if God were omnipotent, this is not a bar to God's becoming less than omnipotent. When it comes to considering God as limited by his creation, by the freedom of creatures for instance, the theist would not be compelled to say that God is omnipotent in some incoherent (and tyrannical) sense, ^{affirm} that God was omnipotent but clearly ^{did not} have the power to become less than omnipotent. It is not true, the theist might argue, that an omnipotent God, the God of theism, could not suffer (where this is said to imply powerlessness), if he decided to.³ Such a modified omnipotence can be strongly defended.

However, there is no reason to believe that a perfectly good God might not exist, and be a God with quite limited powers: powers less than those of greatest logically possible degree. This is not an option immediately apparent in Swinburne's discussion of modified omnipotence, the main elements of which are as follows. The paradox of the stone is intended to show that the concept of omnipotence is incoherent. God can create a stone he cannot lift, or he cannot. In either case there is something that the omnipotent being cannot do. One response is to say that for an omnipotent being to create a stone he cannot lift is self-contradictory: for God cannot do the logically impossible i.e., create something which in so doing involves the contradiction of omnipotence. But this misunderstands the paradox which is intended precisely to show that omnipotence is an incoherent concept. Swinburne's own reading is that it is an ability of an omnipotent being to cease to be omnipotent. Thus it is possible for an omnipotent being to make a stone too heavy to lift, though a person may always remain omnipotent because they never exercise their power to create such stones (CT p158). So he avoids the problem of asserting that there are certain things God cannot do.

However, Swinburne still wants to assert that God is omnipotent in the sense that he has not exercised his power to cease to be so. Why? Perhaps this reflects an attachment to a conception of metaphysical perfections. But Swinburne's treatment is founded on a desire to see if a coherent account can be given of a claim that theists have often "wished" to make (CT p149). He makes no argument for the necessity of omnipotence. One such argument might be that if God's nature is infinite, it must embrace such characteristics as omnipotence. That if it does not, then God cannot be the highest and most perfect being, a being who exemplifies all that is not incompatible with perfect goodness. That is, in perfection, God exemplifies all compatible characteristics to the highest degree. But if

it is not accepted that God has to fit this definition in the first instance - in fact we merely hold God to be perfectly good, the creator and ruler of the universe - then there seems little to stop one abandoning omnipotence. There are though, other arguments that can be made in favour of omnipotence.

Of a God who is not necessarily omnipotent, we may say that it is possible to conceive of things arranged better if he were omnipotent. However, with the key criterion here being that the evil that there is be justifiable, the less than omnipotent God's existence will only (conventionally) be open to disproof on the grounds of the problem of evil, if the condition of justifiability is not met. For this is the criterion that is to be met, and not one which demands that what is created be the best logically possible for a God who can do all that is logically possible. And yet, surely God's power does have a bearing? If he is less than omnipotent, won't there be a threat of some suffering which is unjustified, beyond his control? As I will argue however, if we say God is wholly good, we will have to hold that the evil that there is is of a kind which would not be incompatible with this. The less than omnipotent God would not permit that which was not justifiable (my aim here is not to show how this whole issue might actually be resolved, but to indicate what the conditions attached to making statements about God and evil are).

The fact that a God who is not omnipotent cannot do all that it is possible for an omnipotent God to do, does not seem a bar to attributions of genuine creative power; power of creation *ex nihilo*. Nor to the characteristic of perfect goodness manifested in creation through that which expresses love, and so on. Lack of divine freedom to realise all logically possible goods, can appear problematic. One arguable attraction

of Swinburne's modified omnipotence is that God is free to create whatever is logically possible and for the highest good, whereas a less powerful God is restricted in the range of possibilities for the expression of their perfect goodness. Even so, they may still be perfectly or wholly good. The God of limited power creates only what is compatible with their perfect goodness. We could say that God is wholly good where he/she achieves loving ends through always justifiable means (i.e., good proportionate to evil).

Aversion to a less than Swinburnianly omnipotent God might arise because a less than omnipotent nature freely arrived at from the position of loving omnipotence, a dramatic kenosis, seems more re-assuring than a state of similarly restricted power which is itself the initial condition for divine creative action. Yet if God's purpose requires that he create free agents, and this is a significant limitation on his power however powerful he/she may have been, and we do not in the first instance need to qualify the goodness and wisdom of a God simply because he has decided to become less than omnipotent, only if he is incompetent - and this world might in fact have been created by a less than an omnipotent God, and be worthwhile, then this cannot be a good argument for upholding the necessity of ascribing omnipotence to God the creator.

Apart from accepting such arguments, on connections between omnipotence and divine freedom in realising the maximum good, or from the desire for metaphysical perfection in the ground of the universe, it would not seem necessary to ascribe omnipotence to God, unless we know that this world, indeed all that exists, together comprises all that it is logically possible for an omnipotent and wholly good being to do. This claim is unlikely to be advanced.

Swinburne says that God may make stones too heavy to lift, or even universes too wayward to control (ibid), but need never do so. One should add that one reason why these actions should not perhaps be attempted, or even logically possible for God, is that there are moral limits to what God can do. Swinburne recognises this when he explores moral limits under the concept of divine freedom, in chapter 8 of The Coherence of Theism. God is free for instance, in that he cannot effect possibilities for evil unless for the good. His actions are uninfluenced by non-rational factors. He cannot act without reason. If one accepts these kinds of conditions, then God's perfect goodness cannot be abandoned in order to enable otherwise logically possible actions to be performed. God's power is limited by what it is logically possible for him to do, and that includes what is morally possible. The theodicy problem would no longer exist if it were not: God's moral perfection would be fatally compromised.

There is a further variation on the paradox of omnipotence. This concerns human free will. J L Mackie outlines the issues in his discussion in The Miracle of Theism (p.160ff). An omnipotent God can be argued both to be able to create beings whose choices he cannot control, and not able. In the first case, such beings are omnipotently made uncontrollable, but this does not have vicious consequences for omnipotence, for omnipotence is constrained, like all else, by what are logical possibilities and impossibilities. In the second case, God is unable to create beings whom he cannot control, for the idea that there are things which an omnipotent being cannot control is self-contradictory. But for the same reasons as seen above, this kind paradox and its exploration is arguably less important to theism than it might appear. One can argue for instance, that God has been omnipotent in the Swinburnian sense, and has omnipotently limited his power to satisfy the moral purpose of creating

free beings: sentient beings whose actions he cannot control, intervene in, wrongly cause. In such a case the logical possibilities of omnipotence are not abused, and the moral purpose of God is recognised. So the paradox can be avoided if we accept that God has a moral purpose in creation, and that to modify his power is his prerogative. There is, as we have seen, no apparently overwhelming reason why omnipotence is a necessary attribute of a perfectly good God, creator and ruler of the universe.

It seems that modified accounts of omnipotence are in order. Those which say that if a being is to be 'omnipotent' it should be in a way which is logically possible and morally permissible - without the power or the ability to enact or permit that which it is better to refrain from doing. It also seems that whilst omnipotence is not an indispensable attribute, perfect goodness is (I will look at the latter attribute shortly). This is important when we are confronted by claims that theists must believe in a God who is omnipotent, who cannot suffer, or be limited by his creatures.

We can conclude that for any formulation of God's power, so long as it relates to a God of perfect goodness, a justificatory approach to evil will apparently be necessary, whether they are able to do all that it is logically possible to do, or are not able to do all that it is logically possible to do.

OMNISCIENCE:

I shall not refer to Swinburne's discussion of omniscience,⁴ since I am concerned rather with the minimum condition that when God's knowledge is such that he knows all the possibilities that it is logically possible to know as arising from any given state of affairs (or less than these, if

one thinks so). God can only bring about the possibility of things happening, when such possibilities are compatible with certain conditions being met: when it is not such that it would be better to refrain from creating any such possibilities. A position which implies the following proviso: God's knowledge of any potentially vicious limitations of his knowledge (limitations of what can logically be known of what is possible, or perhaps related to an inability to know all it is logically possible to know), will mean that he refrains from creating states of affairs where it is not a known impossibility that they might give rise to unjustifiable evil. Swinburne is concerned with logical difficulties over God's foreknowing and the issue of human and divine free will. The solution he offers is based on support for the thesis of contra-causal choice. Thus God cannot know in advance what we will do, although, we might add, he will know the possibilities. It is also possible to opt for a compatibilist position, of which Mackie develops an important line (see MT p166ff). Whichever route is taken, the need to comply with the entailments of perfect goodness remains arguably unavoidable, which means in principle that the evil that occurs be justifiable; As Aquinas maintained: "The [divine] Will cannot aim at evil unless in some way it is proposed to it as a good" (SCG. 1.95.3). For instance, I would argue that dangers of unjustifiable evil which cannot be a *priori* excluded as the consequences of any particular state of affairs are enough to merit the non-instantiation of such a state of affairs. God may not know all the possibilities it is logically possible to know, and even if he/she does, there may be significant limitations. If awareness of such limitations is not carried over into how God acts, God cannot be perfectly good. For whilst God's action would perhaps be intentionally good, if creation gave rise to unforeseeable unjustifiable evils, God would not be perfectly good in the normally understood sense that theists would accept. That is, that in reality, God performs or permits

no unjustifiable evils: that, crudely, but effectively, it cannot be said of God: "the road to hell is paved with good intentions". If we wish to hold that God sees all things at all times 'simultaneously', then, aside from the question of freedom of agents, this would strongly imply, given the criterion of justification, that the evil that occurs will have to be justifiable. God could not, prior to creation, be unaware of what the evils that would occur would be. This raises the problem of how God could always be aware of the events of world history, and ever be in a position to have chosen to created otherwise, if there were unjustifiable evil, seeing that such a decision based on actuality presupposes that the key events will really occur, and are so present to the divine mind as actuality.

WHOLLY GOOD.

If God is wholly good, it seems that he never performs actions which are morally wrong (CT p179).⁵ This I think would seem to include setting up possibilities for creaturely actions which bring about unjustifiable suffering, or natural evils which cause unjustifiable suffering. These are arguably basic conditions for making sense of the concept of a being wholly good, and creator. Yet again, what if he/she freely does that which gives rise to evil which is unabsorbable, which can never be come to terms with, and does so unintentionally? A further condition of perfect goodness would be that where God can never be said to allow such evil to come about intentionally, and if he/she has the perfection normally ascribed to God, it should never be said that there is the possibility that such evil arise unintentionally. The condition is not grounded in detail, as, arguably, the descriptive element alone of the God idea allows one to set up these parameters, as noted above.

What does Swinburne understand by morally good and morally wrong actions? He thinks the former category encompasses those which we have no obligation not to do, and is exclusive of those we ought not to do. The latter are those actions we ought not to do (ibid). Can more detail be added to what characterises moral goodness? I cite Swinburne's account:

"...God does whatever it is of over-riding importance that he should do, including any actions, if there are any such, which are of over-riding importance although they bring no happiness to humans or other sentient beings." (CT p181)

In passing he dismisses a definition whereby a moral action is what is good for sentient creatures. Still, it is hard to see how, at the very least the ultimate welfare of his creatures could not be a fixed consideration for God; nor how God is perfectly good if this means following principles which bring no happiness to creatures in a way which would involve unjustifiable suffering. However, whatever precise definition we give to the final good, the negative criterion that God refrain from doing or permitting that which is not compatible with this good seems by itself sufficient to establish the principle of justification. For what would an unabsorbed evil be? An evil self-contained and for which no meaningful talk of higher good can be conceived (in the life of the individual and/or the community and/or the creation); one that stands outside the possibility of being balanced, rendered into something better; un-related to opportunities and necessities for worthwhile goods. If this is so of some of the evil in creation then God is not wholly good. For it would be morally wrong to permit unabsorbed evils, so defined, even if many other evils are absorbed: that is, if we wish to retain the word "good" of God in a sense which excludes some crucial possibilities, such as interchangeability with what we consider evil; destructiveness, disintegration, maliciousness, delight in suffering an end in itself, and so on.

I have so far concentrated on attempting to show what the most basic entailments of divine power, knowledge, and moral perfection seem to be. The situation can be summarised as follows.

Omnipotence is not necessary to the establishment of a justificatory principle. The justificatory principle applies both if God is omnipotent, or less than omnipotent by nature or resolve. Divine knowledge too, in its knowledge of its limitations and responsibilities, cannot be qualified to a point where the permitting of unjustified evil is no longer a problem: this is true where we retain the normal sense of perfect goodness, where God as God, does not (even unwittingly), permit unjustifiable evils to come to be. Thirdly, perfect goodness can be seen as opposed to evil in such a fashion that the evil that is possible never stands unrelated to possibilities for good. As yet, it appears evident that a wholly good creator is bound to create in a way which excludes certain possibilities for evil, one in which all the evil that is possible is justifiably so.

The kinds of possibilities which are conventionally excluded is a question which can be further clarified through looking at the arguments of theodacists and non-theists. The key feature to be excluded is always instances of evil which cannot be justified. This covers for example, purposeless evil which might not be causally related to that which is beneficial; and in the case of some atheist anti-theodacists, moral evil *per se*: they wish to show that creation actually includes that which should be excluded in a system brought into being by a perfectly good God. Where for instance, true freedom would be being 'such that' one will freely always choose the good, given that it is implied that this is how we will be in the new creation. .



I started by noting Swinburne's introductory definition of God in his contribution to a symposium on the theodicy problem. Very briefly, what is the nature of the problem he sets out? And what, in the broadest terms, would count, for a theodacist, as its resolution? The problem is by now familiar, and seems to arise even if we modify our concept of God's power, for all that exists is created by God's power exercised freely, and if so, should necessarily be compatible with his being wholly good:

"if God exists, then being omniscient, he knows under what circumstances evil will occur, if he does not act; and being omnipotent, he is able to prevent its occurrence. Hence, being perfectly good, he will prevent its occurrence and so evil will not exist." (RR p81)

So it can be held, *prima facie*, that God's existence entails that there be no evil. However, theists will deny that God's being omnipotent, perfectly good, and omniscient excludes his permitting the possibility of evil.

A toothache, suggests Swinburne, is not grounds for thinking that God does not exist. He agrees though that difficulties arise with more profound evils (we may also conclude by extrapolation that tooth-ache occurs in worlds where there is an extremely high probability of other and greater suffering). Here, the theodacist "will claim that it is not morally wrong for God to permit or create the various evils, normally on the grounds that doing so is providing the logically necessary conditions of greater goods" (RR p82: if this can be shown, the problem will be resolved).

I will now look at some of the arguments made to show how evil is justifiable. The principle of justification seems central when one is trying to reconcile the evil that occurs, and is possible, with the existence of the wholly good God. My intention is not to attempt to show

if any of the arguments are decisive, ones against which the non-theist could not possibly advance defeater arguments. If Mackie is right, and God could have created, at the beginning, agents who were such that they freely always choose the good, and this is what being truly free means, then there clearly will be great problems for theodacists. Ascertaining whether, say, Mackie or Swinburne have advanced arguments which are unassailable, is not my task. Swinburne, Hick, Meynell, and others, show us the fundamental options which we have to develop if we are attempting theodicy. So far we have seen Mackie's critique of generalised theodicy positions, and have looked at the grounds which would lead us to argue broadly in the fashion he has, and about the principle of justification. Now we look at positions on free-will, responsibility, soul-making, as they are held by theodacists. Are they fundamentally incompatible with Christian belief? Do they reveal, crucial as they are to the theodicy case, that the notion of justifiability is basically flawed: that it is not one we could attempt to sustain as Christians, once we have looked at human existence, and the kinds of goods we really do hold to make us distinctive and blessed? Perhaps the ideas of freedom, noble action, sympathy, are though, one's we must argue for, even if we disagree with some of the ways in which certain theodacists have gone about this. I shall conclude each section with a brief summary on whether or not what is said is evidently incompatible with Christian belief, if it undermines the principle of the justification of evil. Clearly, there will be areas which are frequently contested by anti-theodacists. This is an important spur to development, but the key interest is in the question of the centrality of the general thrust of these arguments; if they are about things which Christians hold as vitally important, and which, if shown to be impossible, would make continued belief also impossible.

The following outline of a theodicy is given in Reason and Religion (p81ff). Swinburne starts by distinguishing between the evil that happens to people and animals, and that which people do. The first category covers physical suffering, mental suffering, and 'state' evil, this last relating to mental states such as hatred, but also to such situations as the disfigured beauty of the world. This general category is termed passive evil. The second category is that of moral evil. Many of the passive evils will be the consequence of past or present moral evil.

Swinburne is perhaps thinking of the arguments advanced on the subject of free will by J L Mackie when he writes that the "'anti-theodacist' suggests as a moral principle... that a creator able to do so ought to create only creatures such that necessarily they do not do evil actions" (RR p84). Swinburne cites Alvin Plantinga's formulations of the free will defence as an argument the theodacist will surely employ against this principle. I shall discuss Plantinga's argument separately, but essentially, its conclusion is that it is not logically possible for God to create beings who freely perform good actions only. The potential for a free agent to do evil cannot be avoided if the good of free action is desired, of authentic free love. Swinburne expands on this. Some agents might have choice, but not the capability of moral choice. They might lack discriminatory powers; be subject to external control; or see with absolute clarity that which it ^{is} right to do, with temptation to do only the right, not that which is wrong. By contrast, where human free agents are concerned, we are dealing with agents with the 'power' and 'opportunity' of exercising some "sufficient moral discrimination" over good and bad actions, and susceptible to temptation, though not overwhelming, to do the bad. Theodacists, Swinburne holds, will argue that it is good for such agents to exist (RR p85). Also, that it is logically impossible to make humanly free agents such that they always

refrain from performing morally bad actions. As Swinburne admits, this last point is hotly debated (see the section below on J L Mackie). He proposes to "circumvent" the question here by arguing that humanly free agents are agents whose choices "do not have fully deterministic precedent causes" (RR p86). Granted this, he argues, it will not be logically possible to create free agents whose choices "go one way rather than another" (ibid). He adds:

"Surely as parents we regard it as a good thing that our children have power to do free actions of moral significance - even if the consequence is that they sometimes do evil actions." (ibid)

We now move to the second stage of the proposed theodicy. Up till now, the compatibility of moral evil with God's existence has been defended. Still, what is needed is an argument which shows that the evil which flows as a consequence from moral evil is compatible with God's existence. The anti-theodicist may bring forward the principle that God create a world of free agents where the consequences of moral evils are not evil, or certainly do not affect others (ie, none other than their perpetrators). Swinburne rejects this principle. A world where wrong actions did not affect agents would not be one with responsibility. Therefore it is not mistaken for God to create agents "responsible for each others well-being, able to make or mar each other" (RR p87; or themselves, we may add). It may be, continues Swinburne, that the anti-theodicist says the world should be one where responsibility is for giving or withholding benefits, but does not involve the possible infliction of pain. But this is to rob responsibility of its depth. If I can choose to give you sweets, but not to break your leg, my influence on your future is weak. Withholding benefits too, involves deprivation, and this can cause suffering. According to Swinburne, this kind of correlation between action and kind of consequence is not arguably worse than the situation in a world where no such pattern occurs (although of course, we might want to argue that we can be free without suffering at

all, that we are not forced to make a choice between a world where suffering is appropriately connected to action, or not so connected). So, overall, it can be argued that the possibilities for passive evils to be experienced by those not responsible for the moral choices behind them are logically necessary if we are to have "great responsibilities".

Swinburne moves next to the question of character formation. As we do not intervene constantly in the quarrels of developing children, so as not to rob them of experience of growing responsibilities, of responsibility itself, so God will not impose an already formed character on human agents. To do so would be to give the agent "a character which he had not in any way chosen or adopted for himself" (ibid). Still, it is noted that the theodacist may object on a different level. Are there not limits to the suffering a parent would permit children to inflict upon each other? God may rightly tolerate a child's quarrel, but the terrible misuse of responsibility in Belsen? Here Swinburne argues that the theodacist does not need to deny that God will prevent affairs from reaching too evil a state. For indeed "there are limits to the amount and degree of evil which are possible in our world" (RR p89).

He thinks that anti-theodacists have a 'crunch' question to offer theodacists in the issue of the sheer quantity of evil. Why cancer and war, rather than just backache and disagreement? (RR p100) The answer to this question on natural disasters and disease is that they allow opportunities for "working together for good" ibid. So the theodacist has an answer to an anti-theodacist principle, that God as creator is not to allow evils which are not the result of choices by free human agents. They are logically necessary to bring about 'noble' kinds of action. The same is true of war (the possibility of such conflicts also, presumably, giving us great responsibility).

Swinburne accepts (in part) Plantinga's argument that passive evil not caused by moral choice is the work of fallen angels; it helps explain why certain animal suffering existed before the development of humanity (RR p93). Yet Swinburne does not think it required for the defence of human suffering and the pain that relates to physical malfunctioning (ibid). These are, he holds, the greatest areas of passive evil outwith human responsibility. They are also phenomena necessary for the growth of courage, patience, and tolerance.

It appears to Swinburne that God has three basic options in creating a universe. A universe, good, without need of improvement, and in which human agents, free, "know what is right, and pursue it": Where "they achieve their purposes without hindrance." Or one basically evil, where all needs improving, yet can be improved. Or one half finished, basically good; a world in which we come to know what is right, and overcome obstacles, and finally achieve our purpose (RR p95). It is this last world which God has evidently chosen to create. He continues:

"The universe may be such that it requires long generations of cooperative effort between creatures to make it perfect. While not wishing to deny the goodness of a universe of the first kind, I would suggest that to create a universe of the third kind would be no bad thing, for it gives to creatures the privilege of making their own universe." (ibid)

Swinburne digresses to look at a criticism and defence of the free will defence. In response to the argument that it is logically necessary for ends to exist in order for certain good actions to be performed, the anti-theodist may say that only the appearance of suffering is required to elicit sympathy. But this, it is argued, is to propose a systematic deception, so that feelings are not represented by behaviour. And a world without evil in this manner would be one where the noble actions referred to earlier could not exist. Still, if we accept that in the free will defence it is right that God allow creatures to inflict suffering on

each other, the anti-theodocist again may respond that it is God's duty to stop people hurting each other beyond certain limits. To this the theodocist can reply that it is not God's duty to intervene where it is clearly ours (RR p91). Our doing so depends on knowledge of the probable outcome of certain situations. And, crucially, where God is considered, with his knowledge of consequences, he knows more than we can do about outcomes. Given the nature of our responsibilities and their importance, and God's understanding of the connections between suffering and goods, "God may very well have reason for allowing particular evils which it is our duty to attempt to stop at all costs, simply because he knows so much more about them than we do" (RR p92). God has "parental rights" to let us experience suffering for the good of our soul (ibid).

How does Swinburne see God's intention in forming human nature as it is? We will have to have some kind of nature. There are natural purposes - obtaining food, sleep, procreating. Assuming that the universe is 'half-finished' and requires improvement, there are further purposes in the existence of human agents. God may aid humanity in taking the right path towards improvement. He could incline if not compel us to improve things, to do what is good. But this, thinks Swinburne, is to impose character. Instead, he could provide strong causal reasons to improve affairs. Character is not imposed, and the agent is causally inclined to perform an action. Such a reason could be a feeling of pain or sense of deprivation. It could not be a pleasant feeling, for linking a desired goal to a pleasant feeling as motivation is contradicted by the fact that only present feeling can be effective in leading us to act (Against this it is possible to argue that knowledge of higher good could be sufficient intellectually and spiritually to cause one to reach towards it, for by extrapolation from experience of present good to a higher one, one could overcome the bar of present direct feelings to anticipations of those

that are greater. However, a sense of deprivation would be involved). Swinburne's contention is: "For men to have reasons which move men of any character to actions of perfecting the world, a creator needs to tie its imperfections to unpleasant feelings, that is, physical and mental evils" (RR p97). This, he argues, is considerably true of the world. Pain and suffering elicit sympathy and efforts to bring about a better state of affairs; no character is imposed, both saint and sinner, irrational and rational being given inductive evidence that care of the body and improvement of the world lessen the possibilities for suffering (ibid).

So, Swinburne's theodicy envisages a struggle to overcome evil, which, in his own words, is no parlour game. His principal supposition is that it is good that God make "a half-finished universe and create immature creatures, who are humanly free agents, to inhabit it." Also (p99):

"... that he should allow them to exercise some choice over what kind of creature they are to become and what sort of universe is to be (while at the same time giving them a slight push in the direction of doing what is right); and that the creatures should have the power to affect not only the development of the inanimate universe but the well-being and moral character of their fellows, and that there should be opportunities for creatures to develop noble characters and do especially noble actions."

Therefore it is not, we can argue, morally bad for God to create the kind of universe there is (and Swinburne thinks that there is no easy proof of incompatibility between the kinds of evils we find in the world, and the existence of God).

Here then Swinburne exemplifies some of the most widely used arguments in theodicy. Are they arguments which we would wish to support if we were Christians? Or more decisively, are they arguments or positions we cannot deny if we are to remain Christian? I do not want to define Christianity in terms of Richard Swinburne's thinking, but it does seem that he is defending beliefs very basic to mainstream Christian thought. For

example, he thinks that we will have to affirm that there are worthwhile goods, and that our being free is one of these. We may not agree exactly with how he makes the case for there being such goods, but arguably we cannot repudiate that something similar is close to the heart of our faith in this world as the work of the wholly good God. We cannot hold that there are no goods to counterbalance the evil; that we are automata; that pain is not tied up at all with what helps give us the ultimately good and worthwhile existences we have, without making talk of the wholly good and loving creator, meaningless.

Hugo Meynell considers the problem of evil the most serious objection to theism (references are to Meynell's God and the World p66ff). He accepts the idea that theism implies God's omnipotence as well as perfect goodness, and that given the evil in the world, there is an at least *prima facie* contradiction between God's existing, and this evil's existing (GW p66). Even if we are not committed to any single solution for the problem of evil, Christianity has to have one: "It is not possible to be both honestly and clear sightedly a Christian, and to hold that while there is evil in the world, Christian belief excludes the very possibility of there being evil in the world" (ibid). Meynell defends the idea that God permits first order evil in order to bring about second order goods; goods for which such first order evils are the logically necessary prerequisite. His case responds to the criticisms of J L Mackie.

Briefly, Mackie argued that for second order goods, there are second order evils, and so on in relation to third order goods and higher. Meynell's references are to Mackie's arguments in Mind, 1955 (p200-12). Thus, as second order good is the kind God is held to promote, so second order evil (Mackie is quoted): "'will, by analogy, be the important kind

of evil, the kind which God, if he were wholly good and omnipotent, would eliminate. And yet evil (2) plainly exists.'" Therefore the conventional arguments on graduated goods and evils fail. However, Meynell argues that an infinite regress of orders of goods and evils can be avoided if we posit a third order good. If we hold that first type evils occur as a prerequisite of second type goods, but that there are second type evils which oppose second type good and promote first type evil, we can still argue for a third type good which is "that moral goodness in an agent which will ultimately prevail over real possibilities of second type evil in the agent himself, and over all first- and second type evil with which it comes into conflict in the world" (GW p74). If, as theists believe, there is no third type evil to thwart God's purpose that third type good should prevail, then Mackie's regress is blocked.

Meynell also opposes Mackie's criticisms of the free will defence, arguing that rejection of determinism (of which Mackie's version is 'being such that') does not entail that one is left with purely random choice (GW p73). Even if an action "... could not have been predicted with certainty on the basis of knowledge, however complete, of what preceded it" (GW p51), deviations from plans are not necessarily arbitrary: "An action may be arbitrary in relation to one plan of action, but not so in relation to another" (ibid). And:

"Just because [an agent]... follows one comprehensible course of action, rather than another, it by no means follows that an observer in possession of all the relevant facts would be able to judge it impossible that he should have acted in any way differently from the manner in which he did in fact act. From the intelligibility of one course of action, even when all the relevant circumstances are taken into account, the absolute arbitrariness of any alternative by no means follows, unless the thesis of determinism has been assumed from the start." (GW 51-52)

Meynell's argument seems to hinge on the way we understand rationality. If the decision to go one way rather than another is not purely arbitrary, what is it? What is it that allows us to say of many important

human decisions, thoughts, or actions, that they simply cannot be predicted from an account of our mind state at a given time, but neither are they foisted randomly by synapse activity? Meynell makes the following case for the difficulty of holding to the determinist position and the sense of thinking that our reasoning is the exploration of rational possibilities (and impossibilities), whose outcome cannot be predicted from knowing what we hold or think at the start of our ratiocination:

"Rational beings characteristically behave in accordance with plans which they believe to be appropriate to their situation. Material objects behave according to laws which the scientist can discover. There is an interesting question how these forms of explanation fit together in the case of human beings, who are of course, both material objects and rational beings. One obvious solution is that rational choices are made from choices which are real in that, given the causal preconditions, any one of them might have occurred. This solution is open to the libertarian, but closed to the determinist, who does not believe that there are real possibilities of this kind."
(GW p54)

Meynell continues:

"For him, it seems to me, there are two possible solutions. Either all propositions about acting for reasons can be reduced to propositions about behaving owing to the operation of causes, in that any statement of the first type can be shown to be identical in meaning with statements of the second; or there is no logical connection between acting for reasons and behaving owing to the operations of causes, though the former depends entirely upon the latter. To take the former alternative: I cannot see how one would begin to show that, for example, 'I drew that figure on the paper to demonstrate the truth of Pythagoras' theorem' is really identical in meaning with a series of statements about electrical currents running through the nerves..." (GW p54-55)

And:

"The latter alternative seems to lead to the even more implausible conclusion that it is just by a colossal coincidence (or perhaps by a special divine providence?) that a series of electrical and chemical events, obeying the laws intrinsic to such things, really direct our reasoning, which appears to follow very different principles; that our reasoning is really an epiphenomenon of these brain processes, which can have no relation to truth and plausibility such as it is proper for reasoning to have." (GW p55)

This is not a question which we can take further here. I believe Meynell is arguing along lines which we will need to follow if we are to avoid certain serious problems. For instance, if we hold that freedom is not

being free to have acted otherwise than we did, but acting in accordance with laws which would allow us to predict what people would do if we knew enough about these laws, and the totality of things, then people would be acting in ways which they could not refrain from doing. If this is the case, then a theologian confronted with the awful suffering there is, will have to acknowledge it as God's responsibility. What would it mean to say God is wholly good? And we could hardly be described as responsible agents. If one holds that we are truly free in that we are beings who are 'such that' we freely always choose the good, then either one's concept of good is confused, or one is not seeing the world as it really is. And for a being who is 'such that' they freely always choose the moderately good, or, say, the morally unjustifiable course of action, then one's idea of the creator of such a being would have to exclude their being wholly good. It may be that being 'such that' we freely always choose the good is a notion that Christians will want to defend as a future possibility, but they can hardly accept that we have been, and are at present, radically unfree, without incurring major problems. Consider one radical enunciation of the consequences of the idea that there is no freedom as traditionally thought of. Nietzsche wrote:

"What alone can *our* teaching be? - That no one gives a human being his qualities: not God, not society, not his parents or ancestors, not *he himself*... *No one* is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he lives. The fatality of his nature cannot be disentangled from the fatality of all that which has been and will be... One is necessary, one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole... thus alone is the *innocence* of becoming restored."

(Twilight of the Idols: 'The Four Great Errors' - 8)

Nietzsche of course has got rid of God. But the same sense of fatality will apply to the theology which rejects the tradition of human freedom defended by Meynell. So the possibility of the justification of evil relying on notions of free choice as something worthwhile, and tied in with arguments for our choosing from a number of real possibilities, to exercise responsibility, compassion - to reason with a real variety of

possibilities, to be creative, will collapse. We are left with God as tyrant, the being who creates creatures who suffer from delusions that they could act and exist otherwise than they do; who can not do other than suffer such delusions. What could be worthwhile here? But I do not think we need to develop this further. Arguably, Christianity does not involve such fatalism, and if it did, there could be no genuine moral responsibility. Since theologians wish to affirm that the world God has created is good, and that we are free in the sense that we could have rationally done otherwise than we did, theodicy will have to be pursued. For instance, theologians will not want to deny that we are finite; that we are limited in what we know, that we do not always act rationally, that we are tempted, and that there is much natural suffering, and that there has been much moral evil. Since the alternative is a doctrine of determinism (or of randomness), and we want to maintain that God is just, we will hold to the idea that we are free in an important sense: that it is possible not to do evil; to respond to those who have suffered evil, or who have been compelled to do evil, as beings whose true rational character requires the right to have real ranges of possibility in choice, the rendering possible of which requires we exercise our freedom for the good. This finitude, freedom and responsibility, if it is to be affirmed, . . . requires we can accept the world as ultimately worthwhile. If we think we are finite, free, and responsible beings who cause and suffer great evil, which is unjustifiable, then we do not accept the world as worthwhile. We cannot accept that a determined world would be a worthwhile one either (delusion of human responsibility). In these situations we would be forced to conclude that God is not wholly good, or does not exist. Ultimately, we must accept that the free will defence, and other classic notions of responsibility and worthwhile behaviour are made redundant at the risk of incoherence.

Meynell also argues against the proposition that an agent is without responsibility when they act in a way not determined by character. Thus: "It is just when we wish to say that, given the kind of person the agent is, he could not have done otherwise than he did, that we deny his responsibility" (ibid). He holds that goodness is something meaningful in the context of possibilities for good and bad choices - at least goodness as normally understood (GW p75). The goodness seems to consist in rejecting the bad (where we might actually have chosen the bad) as much, or more so, the critic might say, than in any intrinsic goodness residing in rational choice of the intrinsically good. But this kind of objection pre-supposes an interpretation of free will which Meynell has rejected. And anyway, what moral good is there in a world where there can be no good of responsibility, since status as agents who are free to be responsible does not exist? We would simply be inter-acting in pre-determined ways. Again, the critic might argue that an agent which chooses the good rationally could be aware of what would happen if it were to choose the evil, but that this latter event would never be realised since there can be no rational justification to perform such an action, nor would any implanted and deeply irrational temptation to do so be compatible with God's perfect goodness. For choosing what a theodist would describe as the good, brings wholeness and joy, whereas choosing the bad brings misery. But this is abstract. Theodists (who I am not going to claim are ultimately right), want to accept the world as one of finitude, and good nevertheless. This is part of the reason why they propose that making mistakes, experimenting, gradually evolving, living in finitude, in recognition of grace, is valuable and justifiable, whereas instantly formed wholly rational agents, might perhaps be valuable, but were not the path God chose when he wished to bring about the particular worthwhile goods (otherwise unobtainable), involved in the human form of existence.

Meynell notes that the Augustinian emphasis on the good of free agents prior to the fall is problematic. Why sin when good? An Irenaean theodicy seems more plausible (ibid p79). Here, God creates an immature humanity and permits evils, in order that a third type good of Meynell's kind be achieved; one that is consummatory and justificatory. What are Meynell's conclusions?

A God who is omnipotent and supremely good has been held so on the ground of a future consummation of creation (that is, if there were none, there would be a fundamental lack of justice, and the wholly good God would not exist). Meynell thinks that holding this belief is consistent with holding to the idea of cosmic justice of the kind central to traditional Christian belief (GW p111). Still, anti-theodacists claim that God is not wholly good if he has permitted the evil that there is. Meynell has brought forward the free will defence. He argues that only in a universe of this kind can there be morally good people. But is this good worth the cost? This perennially occurring question is not something Meynell believes can be given a universally accepted answer, and "perhaps rational discussion will not do much to decide the issue" (GW p82).

Meynell's conclusion is an important one. I earlier argued that theodicy, where we accept the problem of evil as one of justification, is not something that can be laid aside. I held that Ahern's position on eschatological verification and the inability of the finite mind to *know* if the evil that has occurred was justifiable, was inadequate. There remained the problem, if we do apparently need to know every inter-connection between the goods and evils in creation, how can we, finite as we are, ever reach a conclusion? If we look at Meynell's position, a resolution suggests itself. All human life seems to have certain characteristics, in varying degrees. There is joy, love, freedom,

courage, thought and creativity, for instance, and we can affirm, despite the inability to describe the precise inter-connections of goods and evils for every being, that in the history of creation, and for every human being, these are fundamentally worthwhile goods (the question of animal life and suffering is difficult, but it would seem that we have to affirm/recognise that this life is valuable and worthwhile also). This affirmation will involve a hard justification which I will discuss later. If we are unsure about the morality of suggesting that the child who dies of diarrhoea in Ethiopia has had a worthwhile life, then we may decide that soul-making must extend to a realm of justice in a post-mortem existence.

I think that Meynell - by his claim that we cannot reach a universal consensus on values - has indicated how we might argue that what we affirm as good more than proportionate to evil is not something we can necessarily force others to recognise and accept. This does not mean that we are unsure of whether or not we have good grounds for holding to our affirmation. Christians will argue that life and the world is good, even if it has its tragedies. Arguing this case will never be easy, but it must be done if we are to avoid relying as Ahern apparently does, on our human minds comprehending what only an infinite mind can, and if we are ever to affirm that the world there is, is indeed compatible with the existence of a creator God who is wholly good.

I now look briefly at John Hick and his development of an Irenaean theodicy (in Evil and the God of Love). In many ways his arguments bear a close resemblance to those of Swinburne and Meynell. The key similarity lies in the idea of the necessity of evil, or of its possibility, in the process of maturation and 'redemption' of responsible and free human agents. Hick argues: "There is no room within the Christian thought world

for the idea of tragedy in any sense that includes the idea of finally wasted suffering and goodness" (EGL p280).⁶

He thoroughly rejects the notion of the fall of finite free and good agents, as is conceived in the Augustinian tradition (EGL p286). Wholly good beings cannot sin. And if we resort to a pre-destination to fall, matters are only made worse. Hick also finds the 'Jamesian' turning away from God of the collective human soul unsatisfactory. Such ideas fail by their reliance on an inexplicable *creatio ex nihilo* of evil (EGL p289).

As is well known, Hick opts for a "soul-making" theodicy. The world was never meant to be a paradise. It is the scene though, for the "realization of the most valuable potentialities of human personality." God is like a parent, and "to most parents it seems more important to try to foster quality and strength of character in their children than to fill their lives at all times with the utmost degree of pleasure" (EGL p295). Hick is alive to the realities of suffering - moral evil, physical pain and so on. As with the two previous theodacists he finds its justification in the process of maturation: likewise he sees the free will defence as playing a central role in the problem. He refers to the Flew-Mackie attack on the defence, which can be summarised as the question of why does God not create agents who freely always chose the good, if it is logically possible for him to do so? (EGL p307) Hick believes that genuine freedom involves freedom of choice over against our maker (EGL p311). He argues that it is logically possible for agents to be such that they always freely act rightly towards each other, but not for God to create agents who are made such that they authentically love him. 'A' cannot freely love 'B' whilst 'B' has constructed 'A' such that this love is inevitable (EGL p311). It is not an authentically free response. There are, it might be suggested, difficulties with this

defence, such as the criticism that creating agents who can only really mature in a certain direction is to construct a pathway of maturation, and to model responsibilities such that truly responsible decisions can only be those of a certain kind. There is thus a framework of the right and the wrong, and what is authentic right choice will be determined by the structure of good and bad. But, we might say, if we accept that there is an objective ethic, rather than an amoral universe, or an arbitrary morality, is it not true that there is nothing wrong in making rational creatures such that they may if they wish choose the good, whilst also making them creatures who are finite, who grow in understanding, who are sometimes mistaken; who make discoveries, have an inexhaustible creativity, can come independently to realise the value of love and mutual acceptance? I think this will be the necessary course for theodacists to take if they are trying to account for the apparent 'downside' of human behaviour, of a freedom developing without coercion, but with many mistakes and evidence of suppressed, distorted, or evolving rationality, frail social institutions, and violence. No doubt there are weaknesses in such a case, where we might argue that social pressure, deep-set cultural conditioning, emotion, human drives, attenuate the chance of any realistic freedom to do what we may think it is right to do, or even that of achieving an adequate appreciation of the real possibilities and conditions of existence. But that is a topic for theodicy which cannot be gone into here.

The argument for what constitutes rational non-arbitrary choice is an interesting one. Hick holds that we cannot say that action is undetermined by the character of the agent (ibid). What is it to say of actions that they are his or hers if they are random? Nevertheless, he wants to retain an element of "unpredictability". Actions are "largely but not fully pre-figured in the previous state of the agent. For the

character is itself partially formed and re-formed in the very moment of free decision" (EGL p312). Again, we are in a complex area. I do not want to enter into lengthy discussion of this problem. I think it is apparent that if we deny what theodacists like Hick are saying in the free will defence, then all that human beings have done and will do has been fully pre-figured, and we could not have done otherwise than we have (this problem holds where we are held to be 'such that'; for being other than such that we always freely choose the good, problematic enough in itself, clearly not the case, we are then beings whose character determines our acting in immoral and frequently unjustifiable ways). This destroys the idea of responsibility, as each individual becomes a 'piece of fate'. Nietzsche rejoiced at the fall of the free will as a marker in the demise of Christianity. However idiosyncratic the argument, an abandonment of free will is indeed hardly compatible with a Christian anthropology.

Hick thinks that human autonomy almost pre-supposes emergence from apedom. That "God must be a hidden deity, veiled by his creation" (EGL p317). This allows us the "momentous possibility of being either aware or unaware of our maker". And: "Man exists at a distance from God's goal for him, however, not because he has fallen from that goal, but because he has yet to arrive at it". The journey towards that goal as one producing special worthwhile goods is thus the key to understanding Hick's theodicy, as it is those of Swinburne, Meynell, and Plantinga.

He takes horrendous suffering and the demonic, seriously (EGL p324). It would seem that moral evil is out of control, but he affirms that God will have foreseen it: "We must not suppose that God intended evil as a small domestic animal, and was then taken aback to find it growing into a great ravening beast" (EGL p325). Nothing of suffering is wasted (although an anti-theodacist might question the worth of freedom in

comparison to the great negatives of genocide, individual suffering and so on). Hick emphasises the moral liability of the individual for their actions, as well as recognising the over-arching responsibility of God.

In dealing with physical evil, he points to its biological functions. Unnecessary pain, as often occurs in disease can be justified by its usefulness in preserving the human organism against physical injury when in a normal state of health. Pain also prevents us from becoming simple 'lotus eaters' (EGL p343). As the principle behind creation can be said to be that of soul-making (EGL p344), and God desires particular kinds of good, this world, with its pain, can be seen as the logically necessary environment for obtaining these goods. But can all the pain in the world be justified? Animal pain, argues Hick, is not as problematic as it might seem. Animals lead uncomplicated lives, with a "thin thread of consciousness", and are part of an organic whole (EGL p349). We might disagree with Hick's views on the animal mind, but it is arguably essential for a theodocist to be able to assert that on its own terms, such life is worthwhile, and not characterised by unjustifiable torment; or that animal suffering is justified when its logically necessary role in an overall worthwhile world is considered (although this reliance on organic justification can raise problems over the suffering of insentient creatures as particular beings). As to a world without pain, laws govern the consequences of actions. When we do certain things we get certain results. We should ask what kind of world it would be if this were not so. This argument ties in with those on free-will and pain and suffering, as being logically necessary for certain otherwise unobtainable goods. For Hick says the world brings banes and blessings such that "not even an unfettered imagination can see how to remove the possibility of the one without at the same time forfeiting the possibility of the other" (EGL p364).

Hick wishes to avoid rationalising suffering in the sense that there are direct correlations between goodness and badness, and joy and suffering. Clearly there are not on any 'just' consideration which wanted to apportion good and bad in relation to action. Here I think we need to agree that if we argue for the real possibility to do evil as the condition for freedom, responsibility, for allowing ennobling courage, sympathy, and so on, in a complex society of finite beings, and allow for all kinds of maladies, mistakes, and natural disasters, hope of arithmetical distribution of joy and suffering on the grounds of virtue is unrealistic. On 'dysteleological' evil Hick hovers between ascribing the occurrence of irrational suffering to 'mysterious' processes, and more or less explicitly (and truly) rationalising it as the 'mysterious' which contributes "to the character of the world as the place in which true human goodness can occur and in which loving sympathy and compassionate self-sacrifice can take place" (EGL p372; see also p389). Ultimately, given that he holds God to be aware of the possibilities, and perfectly good, the theodicy rationale behind suffering, dysteleological or otherwise, moral or physical, must be said to triumph (worthwhile goods otherwise unobtainable). After all, Hick has argued that there can be no wasted suffering in God's world.

The eschatological in Hick is crucial. Theodicy requires an after-life for the bringing to completion of the soul-making process, for the fulfilment of lives (EGL p375). But what of the terrible evil that has scarred this world? Is it not real evil after all? Hick thinks that the dualistic vision of good and evil reflects the valid human perception, shared by Jesus on the cross, which views evil as a demonic reality, as utterly evil, irreconcilable to God. On the other hand, the monistic view understands that there is a purpose in our suffering, and that is soul-making. Evil is truly evil, but there is a goal and justification. On

this issue Hick expresses something we have seen as arguably central to a coherent theology/theodicy. First, he expresses horror at the extermination camps:

"These events were utterly evil, wicked, devilish and... they were wrongs that can never be righted, horrors which will disfigure the universe to the end of time... It would have been better - much much better - if they had never happened." (EGL p397)

Nevertheless, despite the obvious difficulty of the path trodden here, of those extermination projects it can be said (and this is implicit in Hick's over-all position and conclusion), that they:

".. will be seen to have been used as stages in the triumphant fulfilment of the divine purpose of good." (EGL p400)

Here one can look at Hick's favoured method of counter-factual hypothesis. What if this were not the case? What if such evils are really purposeless, purely destructive, so awful as to be incompatible with the creation of free and responsible, finite and tempted agents whose existence is an expression of the divine goodness and its purpose, a purpose which is not thwarted or or made a nonsense of by the course of history? Would one be forced to conclude that a God who somehow permits and constructs such possibilities for great good but greater evil, would not be God, would not be wholly good? Why would have such agents, and such all too real possibilities have been created? This is a question which, arguably, every Christian should ask.

Turning briefly to A C Ewing, I shall note only his defence of the idea of organic unities. Ewing, following Wisdom (Mind 44 1935), finds in G.E. Moore's Principia Ethica, that the principle of unities can be applied to the problem of evil (Ewing: Value and Reality p215ff). Moore held that an organic whole could possess a particular good derived from the relation of its parts. While we may argue that the means to an end are irrelevant if the ends can be achieved otherwise, it is possible that the goods of some organic wholes cannot be achieved otherwise than through

certain relations of particular parts. A part of such an organic whole cannot be considered a dispensable means to the good. For instance:

"Suppose the part removed, and what remains is *not* what was asserted to have intrinsic value; but if we suppose a means removed, what remains is just what was asserted to have intrinsic value. And yet... the existence of the part may *itself* have no more intrinsic value than the means." (Principia Ethica p29: CUP 1976)

Ewing develops the details of this argument at some length. The principle of its application to the problem of evil should be evident. What is itself bad, may, as Ewing points out, contribute organically to a whole of great value. Are there then evils which are a necessary condition for the bringing about of certain goods? Ewing is at one with Swinburne, Meynell and Hick when he argues that there are. Worthwhile goods include courage, sympathy, self-sacrifice, love, the conquering of evil itself (VR p216-7). And he holds that: "The more different kinds of good there are the better the world, provided they are not purchased at too high a price in evil" (ibid). This latter proviso is of course the concern central to theodicy. So far, I think, we have not had reason to say that it is incompatible with Christian belief, or to doubt that if it were, and good was purchased at a price acknowledged as too high, that we would be attempting to sustain an empty concept of what perfect goodness involves. In fact, it seems to embody what would be basic to a Christian notion of justice and love, one which did not involve sadism, masochism, or unintelligibility. Ewing's argument here is a variation on the theme of logically necessary possibilities. It is hard to see what a Christian theology of nature would be able to say if the various aspects of reality and existence which involve suffering and challenge were ruled to be wholly or unjustifiably bad, and not at all necessary as possibilities in the first place for God to bring about the goods which he apparently wants. Ewing thus presents a further case for integrating suffering or its possibility into a vision of God's fundamental plans for the world.

I conclude this review of basic theodicy moves and conditions by looking at Alvin Plantinga and J L Mackie on free will. Is this the kind of argument that Christian theists and theodacists must become involved in? Plantinga's arguments are a rejoinder to those like Flew (see New Essays in Philosophical Theology p149ff : SCM, 1959), and Mackie who argue that God could have created beings who are such that they always freely choose the good; created a world in which beings are free always to do what is right and pleasing to him; one in which the agent S freely abstains from doing wrong (see for instance Mackie, MT, 1982, p174). Part of the strength of Mackie's case ~~does~~ rely on the fact that he thinks the world does contain unabsorbed evils, which clearly God would have avoided permitting if he were wholly good, and would have been wholly able to avoid if he could have created beings such that they always freely choose the good. Whether there are unabsorbed, unjustifiable evils is crucial to this case, as is the related question over whether God really should have created beings who were such that they freely always choose the good. It might be equally good if he did not, and created a rich and complex world such as theists claim he has, one which has a logically necessary character for the goods it brings about; goods otherwise unobtainable (although Mackie also questions the coherence of a non-compatibilist idea of freedom). This was the kind of argument against which Plantinga postulated trans-world depravity (GAF p49ff). Plantinga puts the question, is it possible for God to create a world containing moral good, but without moral evil? He thinks not.

Plantinga wants to show that it is a possibility that of all the worlds God is not able to actualize, were included those containing moral good, but no evil. If a man is offered a bribe, and free to decide either way, and takes it, then it is the case that God could not have created a world in which the man decided otherwise. If he refuses the bribe, the

latter is true again. Take S - the state of affairs that the bribe is offered: one which precludes neither acceptance or rejection, and is as similar to the real world as possible. To maximise this similarity, the real openness of the situation, S does not include either the acceptance or the rejection of the bribe. Posit two worlds which include S ("every possible state of affairs that includes S, but isn't included by S, is a possible world".): W in which the bribe is accepted, and W' in which it is rejected. S "is what remains of W when... taking the bribe is deleted; it is also what remains of W' when... rejecting the bribe is deleted" (GAF p46). Take a world W' in which the individual is "significantly" free, and never does the wrong. When the situation S is considered, then its actuality in W' would mean that this individual would have chosen the wrong: thus W' is not a world that can be actualized. Neither could God compromise the significant freedom by causing the individual to choose the right. Plantinga calls the situation in which a significantly free individual in any world W and where S pertains; one that neither includes nor excludes that person's doing right or wrong in regard to a morally significant action, and where the wrong is chosen if S is actual, an example of transworld depravity. We may all suffer this condition, and if this is so, then God could not create any of the possible worlds where those people who do exist, would always do the good without at least once choosing the wrong. However, as we shall see, there are problems with this argument coming from the ideas behind individual essence.

Plantinga argues, could God have created other people than those who do exist? Say that all persons are instantiations of essences (E), then it is possible that all essences suffer from transworld depravity and that thus "S includes E's being instantiated and E's instantiation's being free with respect to A and A's being morally significant for E's

instantiation/... S is included in W but includes neither... [performing nor refraining from a morally significant action: my abvtn.]" And: "... if S were actual, then the instantiation of E would have gone wrong with respect to A" (GFA p52ff). Plantinga maintains that: "if an essence E suffers from transworld depravity, then it was not within God's power to actualize a possible world W such that E contains the properties is significantly free in W and always does what is right in W" (ibid). But further, Plantinga thinks it possible that every created essence suffers from this transworld depravity. And if so, "it's possible that God could not have created a world containing moral good but no moral evil" (ibid).

Mackie thinks that Plantinga's proposition that every creature suffers from transworld depravity is implausible unless God is faced with a limited number of creaturely essences (MT p174). It is not logically impossible, he believes, that even a created person can always choose to do the good, and additionally, Plantinga supposes the limit to the range of possible persons is a logically contingent one. Yet: "*how could there be logically contingent states of affairs, prior to the creation and existence of any beings with free will, which an omnipotent god would have to accept and put up with?*" (ibid) Again, for Mackie, Plantinga's idea of individual essences is confusing, in that, presumably non-causally, they determine how an individual will act, choose freely, in each set of circumstances. Thus:

"The concept of individual essences concedes that even if free actions are not causally determined, even if freedom in the important sense is not compatible with causal determination, a person can still be *such that* he will freely choose this way or that in each specific situation." (ibid)

Given that this were so, an omnipotent God with an unrestricted range of all the logically possible individual essences from which to create would have been free to create creatures who were such that they would always freely choose the good (ibid).

As I have noted though, it is not necessarily the case that God would anyway need to create creatures who were such that they would freely always choose the good. We are in fact interested in holding that there are worthwhile goods which are obtainable or present only in the kind of world, and with the kind of existence, we actually have. Plantinga's defence is an interesting one, and is one way we might attempt to show that it is wrong to think Christians could be wedded to the idea that a wholly good God could create beings 'such that' they always freely choose the good. Nevertheless, Mackie shows that there is a real problem with the idea of essence, and this seems to undermine Plantinga's position.

I shall not go further than this, for I have merely wanted to explore some of the things theodacists feel are essential in making the case for the justification of the evil that there is in the world, and which look to be positions whose defence is crucial for Christian belief. Plantinga's idea of transworld depravity is not one of these, since I think that whether theodacists wish to defend the notion that we will in heaven be 'such that' we will freely always choose the good, or not, they have to defend the idea that we are presently free in some important sense, and that moral evil can be justified. The other thinkers I have looked at all touch on major themes in theodicy. I do not think that in intention and working any argument was incompatible with Christian belief: all wanted to justify evil, reconcile it with the existence of the wholly good God. As to whether or not convincing defeater arguments for the cases put by theodacists can be found, this is an open topic, and not one which we need seek to resolve in this particular study of Moltmann and his attitudes to the problem of evil. I believe why this is so will become evident when, in the next chapter, we start to explore the fundamental issues his thinking raises, related to whether or not

Christians should attempt theodicy in the first instance.

CHAPTER THREE

What then of Moltmann's attitude to the theodicy question? He understands the question in a manner which puts the emphasis on eschatology for its resolution, but not in a way that would be comprehensible to theodacists with their justificatory concerns. In fact, the theism of the theodacists (with its usually careful description of attributes and exploration of attributes), is rejected. Along with this rejection there thus seems to go a disavowal of detailed analysis of concepts of responsibility, perfect goodness, and justice. I believe that this particular rejection of theism involves a loss of theological coherence, especially where the problem of evil is concerned. I will look first at the portrayal of theism in The Crucified God, for its view of why people should reject theism, why there is atheism, offers insights into the reasons behind the overall unsatisfactory handling of the question of evil. It is not clear if Moltmann takes account of the potential for doctrinal modification available to theists. Nor is it apparent that he understands the way in which atheism based on the problem of evil, whilst commonly tied to theism, can also follow from critique of non-theistic theology of the kind he attempts to develop. A move away from theism and its responses towards evil is not necessarily a move towards coherence. After this preliminary stage, further material from The Crucified God is looked at, where it gives information on how the theodicy problem is understood, or apparently misunderstood.

Following this, discussion will concentrate on his statements dealing most explicitly with the issues of justification and the vindication of God's righteousness. Texts looked at come from The Church in The Power of the Spirit, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, God in Creation, and the

new SCM Dictionary of Theology. There follows the detailed exploration of the major texts, in chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8.

In The Crucified God, theism is identified with the attribution of such characteristics as omnipotence, absolute causality, wisdom, being the best and highest (CG p219-221).¹ Moltmann sees the theology of the cross as standing against this theism, and against the kinds of analogical thinking which are its foundation. The analogical tradition of thought, criticised through discussion of Luther, is that found typically in the 'sentences' of Peter Lombard. It presupposed the possibility of natural knowledge of the invisible God. The universe was permeated by divine rationality: man was able to know nature, and through nature's correspondence with God, to live a life in harmony with God. Moltmann argues that even if the Stoic element was transformed by the notion of the difference between creator and creature, the belief in an *analogia entis* prevented a substantive break. He sees the medieval view of human *excellencia* embodied in this leading to an exaltation of man.

So, the analogical principle is questioned. Yet Moltmann is cautious. He continues by arguing that it is only "probably" questionable whether everything in fact "corresponds to God and is connected with his being through an *analogia entis*..." (CG p210). It is then held: "Logical inference really only advances correspondences of being to correspondences in knowledge" (ibid). Thus, given that humanity is corrupted, it becomes difficult to discriminate between that which corresponds to God, and that which does not. There are a number of difficulties with this position, given that I see it undermining the analogical approach. First, even if we are not sure as to what exactly corresponds to God's love, we will have to affirm that since God is

wholly good, and this is something with certain entailments, then his creation expresses this goodness in important ways, and is not ultimately incompatible with it. So, secondly, whilst we may be painfully aware of distortions in human behaviour, we must, if we are not to get involved in a highly dangerous rejection of the world, hold that there is good reason for an analogical grounding to our faith. To deny that in true harmony with nature we can live in harmony with God, is to so diminish the fact of the world as expression of God's essential love that we may have reason to wonder what the divine creative and sustaining love is if it is not to be senseless.

Atheism, it is said, looks at the world and sees only absurdity, injustice, and nothingness. As with theism, atheism perceives a finite world, and attempts to work to its causes and its future. Of course, it reaches different conclusions. For, states Moltmann: "as the world has really been made, belief in the devil is much more plausible than belief in God" (CG p220). Indeed:

"If one argues back from the state of the world and the fact of its existence to cause, ground and principle, one can just as well speak of 'God,' as of the devil, of being as well as nothingness, of the meaning of the world as absurdity." (CG p221)

Atheism is characterised as a pre-occupation with the negative in existence. For: "In this atheistic, de-divinized world, literature is full of the 'monotheism of Satan'", and: "the history of Western atheism becomes at the same time the history of nihilism" (ibid). Again, perhaps rather dangerously: "With just as much justification as that with which theism speaks of God, the highest, best, righteous being, it speaks of the nothingness which manifests itself in all the annihilating experiences of suffering and evil" (ibid). Here Moltmann makes a

statement, characteristic of his arguably loose handling of the theodicy problem, one whose implications are not followed up satisfactorily, at least in The Crucified God. He ventures to question if protest atheism can still live if metaphysical theism dies? Of protest atheism he writes:

"For its protest against injustice and death, does it not need an authority to accuse, because it makes this authority responsible for the state of affairs? And can it make this authority responsible if it has not previously declared it to be behind the way in which the world is and exists?" (ibid)

To this we might say - clearly, responsibility for the world is the basis for the theodicy debate. If God is not responsible for the way the world is, then it is unreasonable to expect him to justify his perfect goodness, as 'creator', in relation to the suffering of 'his' 'creation'. Indeed the problem of evil will disappear, along with the Christian doctrine of God as sovereign creator of the universe, and as wholly good and just. Now, if God is responsible in some fundamental way, then we do have a real justificatory question to face up to (granted that we give 'wholly good' or 'justice' the kind of sense which it is essential to have if any problem is to be perceived in the first place).

Moltmann continues his offensive against theism (CG p219-21). He believes that theism is in conflict with the theology of the cross, the latter alone being the theology which can speak of God in terms of his suffering love for the weak. Metaphysics sees the divine in terms of unity and indivisibility, immutability, eternity and so on. It attempts to secure finite being on a divine ground which excludes all determinations against being. The divine is, in Moltmann's words, the "zone of the impossibility of death" (ibid). It was this conception, he thinks, which led to the death of real trinitarian theology, a theology able to deal with incarnation and passion (CG p215). A theology which takes the death of the Son of God seriously, will understand God *from* this event. The

metaphysical perception of divine being will be transformed: "It must think of the suffering of Christ as the power of God and the death of Christ as God's potentiality" (ibid). Still, "it must think of freedom from suffering and death as a possibility for man." Whilst theism says God cannot die, in an attempt to secure finitude from non-being, Christian faith is to say that we might live and rise again in his future" (CG p216). Moltmann goes on to describe how the forgoing of an omnipotent God effects liberation from childish illusions and desires for a father figure (ibid). Nevertheless, there are strong parallels between theism and Moltmann's view of the theology of the cross.

He argues that the theology of the cross sees, like the 'metaphysical' view, that all is subject to transitoriness. Yet it also sees nothingness as vanquished, and "the prospect of the hope and liberation of all things" (CG p218). The metaphysical desire for infinity and the intransitory is transformed into the eschatological hope for the new creation (ibid).

As we shall see, it is not clear in what way this theology of the cross differs fundamentally from theism in its desire to see finitude given radically new determinations, exclusive of those which threaten being, and in its pessimistic evaluation of present modes of being. And indeed, here Moltmann does not think that the theology of the cross marks the termination of 'metaphysics', but takes it up anew in its consideration of the history of the world as history within God's horizon for the world (CG p218-19). For:

"The event of the resurrection of the crucified Christ makes it necessary to think of the annihilation of the world and the creation of every being from nothing." (CG p218)

And:

"The cross is 'set up in the cosmos to establish the unstable,' ... There is a truth here: it is set up in the cosmos in order to give future to that which is passing away, firmness to that which is unsteady, openness to that which is fixed, hope to the hopeless, and in this way to gather all that is and all that is no more into the new creation." (CG p219)

What then can be established about Moltmann's views on theism and theodicy so far? First, despite similarities between a theology of the cross which cannot accept the present transitoriness of reality, and theism, theism as the ascription of certain traditional attributes to God is rejected. It engenders and supports illusions connected with immature attempts to secure stability. It involves an omnipotent God who cannot suffer. A God, who unlike the God of the cross, we are told, "sits over man's conscience like the fist on the neck" (CG p216). About *theodicy*, we have seen little yet. But related subjects have taken on a shape which occurs throughout Moltmann's theology. Moltmann rejects the world as it stands ontologically. Suffering is thus deeply woven into the texture of God's creation (something we shall see increasingly). This fact helps set up the question which we will later seek to answer. How is this state of affairs seen as compatible with God's goodness? Does Moltmann rightly exclude the exploration of reasons why the world is as it is, and the usual connections between these issues and the divine nature and responsibilities?

Moltmann is concerned with the roots of protest atheism as lying with the omnipotent God who cannot die. As we have seen, omnipotence can be modified as an act of omnipotence. If this is accepted, and as long as this action is not seen as incompatible with perfect goodness, it seems that there is in fact no reason why death within the trinity should not be a possibility for at least some theists. The Moltmannian critique of

omnipotence, apart from God's not being able to die, is that such a God cannot love; can only be "almighty" (CG p223).

In Schiller's ode to joy, it is noted, a great reward is promised to humanity in a future life, a theodicy of German idealism (CG p221). Against this kind of thinking, Dostoyevsky's reflections in The Brothers Karamazov, the classic form of protest atheism, were directed.²² Moltmann argues, without adding strength to his own case, that such a statement of suffering is not to be answered by cosmological arguments for the existence of God, nor by any theism, but is rather "provoked by both of these" (ibid). This would seem to leave the believer in the just and responsible God in great difficulty. Keeping in mind the attack on analogical thinking in theology, Moltmann will eventually have to face the problem of outlining a theology which fails to provoke deep theodicy questioning, whilst at the same time retaining a sense of what God's perfect love and justice is in creation - but presumably avoiding the kind of definitional interest of the theists, which has arguably helped us feel the sting of the suffering in the world in the kind of way which makes us ask: 'If God be wholly good, whence then be evil?'

While as we shall see, the problem of evil is taken with great seriousness, Moltmann holds that in the situation that humanity finds itself in, God is revealed as opposed to "all that is exalted and beautiful and good, all that the dehumanized man seeks for himself and so perverts". Indeed, God is "not known through his works in reality, but through his suffering..." (CG p212). It is clear, here at least, that Moltmann has little place for a doctrine of natural knowledge that is sustaining or saving knowledge, although this fact will eventually be

less problematic than the theology of creation itself, with which it is of course inter-related.

So, humanity is dehumanized, but why? Why is it that knowledge of God "is not achieved by the guiding thread of analogies from earth to heaven, but on the contrary, through contradiction, sorrow and suffering" (ibid)? Why is it the case that God's evident ability to love the other, but in this case the suffering and de-humanized, is so called upon? On this track one is asking first why there is suffering and evil, what causes it, rather than the wider question, can it be justified (the answer to this second question depends of course upon the response to the first, and when the originator of all is held to be perfectly just, we also cannot avoid asking the second question). It is necessary to keep this question of the grounds of suffering, of human brokenness in mind when considering a theology which opposes the justification of evil, but which is so alive to the inhuman and de-natured state of creation; witness Moltmann's handling of atheism and its recognition of the 'nothingness' in the world. But is it necessary to be very specific here? Looking at the question of evil and of justification, one is aware that the central issue is that of the compatibility of evil with the existence of the God who is wholly good. Because of this, one does not need to pinpoint certain isolated events, but can point to perceived general features in existence which one would need to hold to be the case. Such as freedom, courage, the beauty of the world; the fact that human existence conceived of as divinely ordered will be worthwhile (this limited requirement stems from my position as investigating Moltmann's view of the problem of evil, rather than being in that of a theodist who has to attempt to show that in the kind of world there is, good is in fact proportionate to evil). What starts as a question of origins will

become one of a divine responsibility which cannot be burdened with having permitted the possibility of unjustifiable evils.

Moltmann's response to the positions of Camus and Dostoyevsky (CG p222), to hostile and rebellious reaction to the God who cannot die, is to assert that God can suffer. Indeed, "a God who cannot suffer is poorer than any man" (ibid).³ The suffering and helpless, mortal human being, is thus richer than the almighty God. However, as we have seen it is not true that the theist necessarily believes in God who cannot suffer. But more important when looking at the question of evil, in the Moltmannian switch from the picture of the inadequate omnipotent being to the suffering God, one is left with the question of responsibility quite untouched. Is a less than omnipotent God not responsible for the suffering in his creation?⁴ If a wholly loving God does what it is simply logically possible for him to do (not everything that is logically possible is in fact within his power to bring about), is there not yet an innate bar to creating that kind of world which will give rise to, or enable unjustifiable evil? Suffering has to be possible before God can suffer. In this world it seems probable that all higher creatures suffer at some time or another, and indeed almost inevitably so. If God is responsible for evolutionary systems, generational organic development, with the consequent suffering involved, then Moltmann's attitude to death and nothingness will require clarification at certain points (see especially God in Creation: there is though a general hostility to mortality in creation). If these aspects of creation are seen as not justifiable, or a giving rise to unjustifiable events and opportunities for inflicting suffering on the innocent (incompatible with the wholly good God), then it appears either that God is responsible, but not the

loving God. Or that he is loving, but not responsible because of some dualistic conflict behind reality as it is.

Moltmann takes up Horkheimer's challenge to theism and atheism. Whilst there is no theistic answer to the problem of suffering, "far less is there any atheistic possibility of avoiding this question and being content with the world" (CG p224).⁵ Moltmann cites Horkheimer's statement that it is impossible to believe in the existence of an omnipotent and all-gracious god. Horkheimer infers this from the suffering and injustice that there is. The incompatibility between the existence of such a God, and that of the evil that there is, is however, hardly one that can bring relief to theologians, or so the atheist anti-theodacist, or the theodacist would say. If God is not sovereign, all-gracious, wholly good, then what is he? If he is not able to do all that is logically possible and compatible with perfect goodness, surely this does not mean that control over the realisation of what is not compatible with his perfect goodness is lacking? What would it mean to say that he was in reality perfectly good? Looking at the world as it has been created, Moltmann holds:

"If innocent suffering puts the idea of a righteous God in question, so conversely longing for the righteousness of the wholly other puts suffering in question and makes it conscious sorrow...If we call the sting in the question *unde malum? God*, then conversely the sting in the question *an Deus sit?* is *suffering*. Cosmological theism answers this double question with a justification of this world as God's world. In so doing it passes over the history of suffering of this world. Either it must be tolerated, or it will be compensated for by the second world in heaven.

This answer is idolatry." (CG p225)

In fact, rejection of compensation in the new creation only heightens difficulties. For, if the righteousness of God is ever truly put in question, and the question does not relate simply to eschatological time-tabling, that must be because there is an at least *prima facie* moral

incompatibility between what is expected of such a God, and what exists. Such an incompatibility must rest on what is attributed to God, such as responsibility in creating, perfect love, and so on. If a situation is awaited, in which God's nature gives rise to exactly the kind of whole and joyful world which is not present now; one which deeply contradicts aspects of this suffering world - a world which gives rise to the question 'when is the new world coming, with its expression of God's righteousness', then certain questions can be asked. If the new creation is compatible with God's being, why in crucial areas, is this world not (in the sense that it simply cannot be justified, even if seen in necessary inter-relation to the coming world)? What kind of creative relationship can God have to the foundation of this *new* world which was not the case with the first creation, and which will allow us to ascribe responsibility for what is good, when we cannot ascribe responsibility for what is unjust in the make-up of this world?

If we reject compensation as Moltmann does here, we are in danger of being incoherent. That is, compensation can be of two types. An injury can be done. Nothing will remove the suffering that occurred, but a new life can be built on the basis of financial and other support. In this case, the compensator accepts responsibility. The injured party was innocent. Nothing can remove the naked fact that the responsible party was in the wrong, guilty. Secondly, perhaps less actuarial, compensation is in a sense inherent in the suffering. That is, without the suffering, or its possibility, there would not be the potential for personal responsibility, freedom, moral choice, character development, care, and so on. This would be a possible theodicitists reading of compensation. There are second order goods involved, otherwise unobtainable. This position is of course open to criticism. Thirdly, there is Moltmann's

position in The Crucified God. Since God is not responsible, at least on one reading, it is clearly inane to suggest that compensation of the normal kind might be involved. The innocent have suffered. There is no conception of second order goods to compensate and offer explanation. Usually, it would be held that only if God is not responsible for the suffering in the way in which he is usually understood to be, as in the free will defence, is he freed from justificatory obligations. But in fact this freedom from direct moral responsibility cannot be for a God who freely creates out of nothing, and whose morality is such that no theodicy is worthy of contemplation. If God is responsible, but accepts that compensation is not possible, what then? Compensation is presumably not possible because it overlooks the reality of the suffering of those who are after all innocent. As J C A Gaskin argues:

"If a human agent makes some ghastly moral error he may repent and try and recompense his victim. With God the situation is worse. With God the notions of error and repentance have no place; and if mundane suffering is such, or in any part such, as God could have prevented but did not, then *no* eternity of cakes and sweets will remove the moral imperfection of him who could have prevented the innocent suffering but did not do so. The innocent suffering stands for all time as innocent." (TQFE p123)

Moltmann does not disagree that innocent suffering is forever innocent suffering. But for Moltmann the question of the longing for God's righteousness can be answered, or at least made no longer relevant. And with it, the question of responsibility also appears to fade into obscurity.

He argues that critical theory and theology share two open questions: "the question of suffering which cannot be answered and the question of righteousness which cannot be surrendered" (CG p225). If the question of suffering really cannot be answered, this is of major consequence. For if God is not morally responsible, in that human beings exercised genuinely

free choice in a way which produced second order goods which outweighed the bad, (we shall omit physical evil here), then the question of suffering is answered, and the question of righteousness can be surrendered. However, if no such explanations are permissible, how is it ever possible to conceive of a completion of creation where unmitigated joy is the key-note of existence, rather than sadness and puzzlement, and the struggle to remember what has passed in the face of the now present joy aspect? What if the horrors of the first creation are unsublimated in the evolution of God and ^{or} the new creation? Can the question of righteousness then ever be surrendered? And is that not an argument against God's being wholly and perfectly good: seeing that he did not refrain from creating? I think it is.

Moltmann's procedure on page two-hundred and twenty-six following, well represents the problems which confront a theodacist seeking more or less conventional answers to the problem of evil within this theology. First, it is declared that, given the question of suffering which sets up evil against the righteousness of God, an apathetic and glorious God enthroned in heaven is inadmissible. It is said of Camus that "he understood well that Christ's cross must mean that God himself renounced his longstanding privileges and himself experienced the agony of death ("Though he could not see "the cross and the deathly anguish of the godforsakenness in God" *ibid*). Theology then, is to recognise how God is the suffering God in the suffering of Christ. Thus the contradiction between God and suffering, as it stands in atheism and theism, is overcome. That is, "God's being is in suffering and the suffering is in God's being itself, because God is love" (CG p227). Yet as we have seen, theism allows of modification, and it is not inconceivable that even an omnipotent or extremely powerful God could have the strength to renounce 'longstanding

privileges', and suffer. Further, when Moltmann characterises theism and atheism as maintaining and sharing the notion of contradiction between God and suffering, his models are narrow indeed. He sees two kinds of atheism. There is "Crude atheism for which this world is everything", this is "superficial". And protest atheism, which is a protest against injustice "for God's sake" (both CG p226). In this way the range of fundamental critique of God is apparently exhausted.

Moltmann points up where he himself is weakest in handling the question of evil, in citing the quip that the best excuse for God would be for him not to exist (CG p225). This is protest atheism as theodicy, one is told. Indeed it is, and highlights the essence of the classical theodicy problem. If it is impossible to justify the evil that has occurred, because it is incompatible with the existence of the wholly loving God, then the atheists are arguably right to say that such a God does not exist. Reality would be transparently joyful if he did exist, or at least free from evils incompatible with God's love: but it is not, and he does not exist. This position is arguably more convincing than holding that if the contradiction between God and suffering as Moltmann understands it is overcome, then Moltmann's theology has surpassed in some major way, the theistic and atheistic options. It is not a straight contradiction between God and his redemptive loving and active suffering that is of primary interest in theodicy, but the contradiction between perfect love and (unjustified) evil. Is there an incompatibility between the two? Naturally, if there is no incompatibility, and the suffering that occurs falls within acceptable parameters, then God's suffering with his creation rightly becomes a focal point. Yet if God is considered a remote authority who allows suffering for its production of justificatory goods, otherwise unobtainable, and *this* idea is rejected, what of the

feeling and wholly good God who presides over a creation of inexplicable and unjustifiable suffering, which is yet his creation, and who suffers too? Where will the breakthrough lie? Arguably there is none.

I continue this survey of theodicy passages in The Crucified God by looking at sections 6, 7, and 8 of chapter 6, where the trinitarian dialectical stream in Moltmann is prominent. This creates tensions with the earlier statements on the unjustifiability of suffering. He argues that with a trinitarian theology of the cross God is not remote and other-worldly, but this worldly. And Jesus' death on the cross is not the death of God, but the start of the God-event where the "life-giving spirit of love emerges from the death of the Son and the grief of the Father" (CG p252). Is this then a theology where suffering will have a reason, a necessary role? Is the second stream in Moltmann, the dialectical? This is an issue which we will touch on periodically, as we come across Moltmann's apparently Hegelian passages of thought, and a question which I will seek to answer in the final chapters. If there are grounds to conclude that there is a second stream, then there is a major contradiction at the heart of Moltmann's approach to the problem of evil, founded as it is on the ground of perfect righteousness as manifest in God; for there will be no way to avoid imputing divine responsibility for unjustifiable suffering, or highlighting an amoral, or immoral dialectic.

Moltmann calls protest atheism the "only serious atheism" (CG p252).⁶ He then asks if Christian trinitarian thinking can give some response to the problems of suffering, and the desire for righteousness. Those who suffer without reason, consider themselves god-forsaken; on the cross the cry of forsakenness was there too. Because of this, God is, deeply, the human God: "who cries with him [ie, the suffering human being] and

intercedes for him with his cross where man in his torment is dumb." A theodacist or atheist anti-theodacist might still ask what the origin and justification of such suffering might be. In The Crucified God (pages 253-256) we have a good example of ambiguity where these issues of responsibility, necessity, and justice are concerned. If the theodacist ventures that God's intercession to God on behalf of a suffering and dumb humanity raises the issue of reasons, justification for suffering, two responses can be drawn.

First, love can be seen as having a causal relationship to suffering in the sense that love requires suffering. God is loving, and wants us to be loving, and hence suffering has its place as a necessary component, a pre-requisite for a genuinely loving and worthwhile creation. Thus "Where he [God] has suffered the death of Jesus and in so doing has shown the force of his love, men also find the power to continue to love, to sustain that which annihilates them and to 'endure what is dead,' (Hegel). Hegel termed this the life of mind" (CG p253). This is followed by quotation of an important passage from the Phenomenology of Mind (93), which it is worth citing in order to highlight the tensions in Moltmann's position, certainly in The Crucified God:

"But the life of mind is not one that shuns death, and keeps clear of destruction; it endures death... It only wins to truth when it finds itself utterly torn asunder. It is this mighty power, not by being a positive which turns away from the negative, as when we say of anything it is nothing or it is false, and, being then done with it, pass on to something else; on the contrary, mind is this power only by looking this negative in the face, and dwelling with it...(my abvtn - Phenomenology, *ibid*: CG p254)

It is hard to know the extent to which Moltmann is in agreement with the opinions quoted or described. If Moltmann tells us that Hegel termed God's suffering of the death of Jesus, the life of the mind, does this mean that Hegels' dialectic is what is encountered in the the theology

of the cross? It seems evident that Moltmann does follow Hegel here. That suffering is a part of the life of the triune God. There is little to cause one to doubt this. Moltmann cites Hegel's words that human finitude, the negative, "'is itself a divine moment, is in God himself'" (CG p254: from Philosophy of Religion 111 98). And there is yet another apparently highly significant quotation, in which the following sentences appear:

"The reconciliation believed in as being in Christ has no meaning if God is not known as Trinity, if it is not recognised that He is but is at the same time the Other, the self-differentiating, the Other in the sense that this Other is God himself and has potentially the divine nature in it, and that the abolishing of this difference, of this otherness, this return, this love, is Spirit." (PR 99ff: CG ibid - my abbvtn)

Moltmann holds that the trinity is open to the future, and that it should not be viewed as a closed circle. It is in fact a "dialectical event" (CG p255). The trinity is the history of God, in our terms "the history of love and liberation". The trinity "presses towards eschatological consummation" (ibid). It does this:

"so that the 'Trinity may be all in all', or put more simply, so that 'love may be all in all', so that life may triumph over death and righteousness over the hells of the negative and of all force." (ibid)

And the trinity is:

"... transcendent as Father, immanent as Son and opens up the future of history as the Spirit. If we understand God in this way we can understand our own history, the history of suffering and the history of hope, in the history of God. Beyond theistic submissiveness and atheistic protest, this is the history of life because it is the history of love." (CG p256)

The first of these statements appears problematic when we remember what was said about theism and its justificatory approach. In other words if we are to take seriously Moltmann's citations of Hegel, it seems that the whole trinitarian consummation process is aimed at overcoming the negatives which are themselves posited by God (and are indeed an essential part of the life of spirit). If this is so, and if one is to

maintain God's goodness in the sense that was earlier argued, then God must have foreseen the negative and judged that it was necessary for the attainment of a higher and worthwhile good. It does seem at this point that for Moltmann the negative dimension is a pre-requisite for the full life of the trinity, the history of love. And he writes "Can it really be said of the first creation that in it God was 'all in all'?" (CG p261) He argues that the new creation will be something better than the first. The possibility of sin will be removed (ibid), and "consequently, redeemed existence must be more than created existence" (ibid). Moreover, "the new freedom of the children of God must be greater than the first freedom of men" (ibid).

The question then arises if Moltmann sees the lesser freedom of humanity as something which is: A) The consequence of God's being less than all in all; and in its existence in the first creation a necessary step in the process which will lead him to be all in all. That is, God cannot create a really free humanity until he has evolved with and through the suffering of humanity, and his suffering, to the stage where this new creation is possible. If we try and reconcile this with Moltmann's position on suffering for which there can be no theodicy, then there is clearly unjustifiable suffering incurred in the process: although how much due to lack of real freedom, and how much to natural physical evils is never quite clear (this position would be unacceptable on conventional terms). Or B) The result of a positive Irenaean type progression for humanity. This is not taken up by Moltmann, but its possible justification of moral evil at least, would help to lessen the potentially destructive implications of the Moltmannian doctrine that our history is a history taking place within the horizon of the history of the trinity. But since this destructive aspect comes from the

rejection of the possibility of justification of all the evil that there is, which means that God creates a history of unjust suffering, relief in the form of the Irenean approach would involve contradiction of what we have seen Moltmann say. The belief in our life as taking place within the horizon of the history of the trinity is nevertheless presented without any major doubts as to the coherence of the non-justificatory position, as can be seen in the maintaining of hope in the action of the (presumably) wholly good God:

"... only with the resurrection of the dead, the murdered and gassed, only with the healing of those in despair who bear lifelong wounds, only with the abolition of all rule and authority, only with the annihilation of death will the Son hand over the kingdom to the Father. Then God will turn his sorrow into eternal joy. This will be the sign of the completion of the trinitarian history of God and the end of world history..." (CG p278)

Problematic, it seems, are the implications of the consequent statement: "Even Auschwitz is taken up into the grief of the Father, the surrender of the Son and the power of the Spirit. That never means that Auschwitz and other grisly places can be justified, for it is the cross that is the beginning of the trinitarian history of God" (ibid).⁷ However, we do not need to become involved in a lengthy debate as to whether or not these events appear to have some place in a process, for the very admission of unjustifiability alone raises immense, and arguably decisive problems. Of course, absorbing such happenings into patterns of divine life and consummation, whilst still maintaining the aspect of unjustifiability could be even more puzzling, although arguably no more damaging in absolute terms when we see how theodacists would react to the fundamental idea of goods not proportionate to the evils (implying from their point of view that God as wholly good does not exist).

The Crucified God ends on a tantalising note for those interested in the question of the degree of necessity in Christ's suffering. It is held

that "Christ is more than necessary; he is free and sets free. He belongs both to the realm of necessity and the realm of freedom, because he is himself the transition" (ibid). A brief digression to examine a little further this notion of freedom and necessity as it relates to God, takes one to The Theology of Joy (p47ff). Here Moltmann notes that traditionally the incarnation was seen as the necessary remedy for human sin. So the tradition could explain why God became man. Yet it failed to account for the contingency in his becoming one man at one particular time and place. This 'randomness', according to Moltmann, indicates the freedom of God "within the polarity of man's need and divine redemption from that need". Most interestingly, for Moltmann, God's freedom means that he is not compelled to redeem humanity (TJ p48). This seems to imply that there can be no moral responsibility for earthly suffering on God's part: and if this were the case, normally at least, it would also imply a free will defence. Assuming, in the absence of a free will defence, that God has responsibility, is he not obliged to redeem humanity from its suffering? But this points out the complexity of the theodicy issue. For if God inflicts suffering on humanity, without its being justifiable as the consequences of genuinely free choices on our part, what can the justification of suffering be? That is, surely it must then be a pre-requisite for some worthwhile good not related to our exercise of a free or unfree choice. Perhaps it is unavoidable that we are sinful, not fully free, and subject to death, because God is not all in all, and cannot create a world without these negatives: and it is in overcoming the negatives that a re-created and new non-mortal existence will be possible. One which will make all the suffering that has occurred worthwhile as developmental suffering, an unavoidable means to a glorious end. Yet in this case surely God is responsible, and obliged to redeem humanity, existing as it does within the horizon of the history of love?

So, if God is not compelled to redeem the unjustly suffering in creation, what are we to make of Moltmann's concepts of divine freedom and goodness? Is Moltmann saying that God could have decided freely not to redeem the world, even if it were only just that he should? He in fact argues that, between the extremes of necessity and caprice, there lies another way. Thus: "Even if the revelation of God in Jesus Christ is not necessary for God himself, it does not constitute caprice; rather it corresponds to God's deepest nature... God was not compelled by human misery to come in the flesh, but he came because of his own free and uncaused love" (TJ *ibid*). This is a concept of freedom developed in greater detail in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God. How one is to evaluate such statements in terms of conventional theodicy debate?

If God creates the world in perfect freedom and goodness, and as part of the history of love, humanity suffers, one can see how God does not value something because it is subjected to evil, but as the God who is love, is 'compelled' by love to help redeem those involved in suffering. This seems to be what Moltmann is saying. Here God's redeeming action is integral with the freedom for God to be what he is, love. In this important sense, it is necessary for God to love the suffering, for not to love the suffering would be self-contradiction. God, it can be held, would not be God. This highlights potential difficulties with Moltmann's notion of God's free love. If it is genuinely so, and God's action corresponds to his deepest nature, then unjustified evils in the world would arguably constitute a very major, indeed fatal problem. That is, if God is such that he could not do otherwise than redeem, out of his deep and unflinching love, we may wonder how any unjustifiable evil could be tolerated in the first place as a component of creation. There is also difficulty if we believe that God is free in the sense that he could

just as well, when confronted by the reality of suffering creation, decide not to redeem, as to redeem. One could then question whether such redemptive action at all "corresponds to God's deepest nature".

To return to The Crucified God, the latter sections of chapter 6 are concerned with the pathos of God. This is relevant material, but I shall leave its discussion till the following chapter. For present purposes, an introductory look at its handling in The Trinity and The Kingdom of God will be adequate. I end with a quotation from Moltmann's reflections on the place of suffering in God. It appears to point to a positive integration of suffering into the divine life. As we have seen, this would be puzzling for those who would be opposed anyway to the idea that belief in God as wholly good and creator is compatible with holding that there is unjustifiable evil. Yet although such dialectical passages add complexity to the exploration of Moltmann's handling of the question of evil, it is perhaps the fundamental understanding that a unjustifiable suffering is tolerable to a wholly good God which is the main problem. The dialectical stream would only appear to make this problematic stance more confusing, through its addition of a clear sense of necessity in the divine toleration of unjustifiable evil:

"... a trinitarian theology the cross perceives God in the negative element and therefore the negative element in God, and in this dialectical way is panentheistic. For in the hidden mode of humiliation to the point of the cross, all being and all that annihilates has already been taken up in God and God begins to become all in all." (CG p277)⁶⁹

As with The Crucified God, I shall leave the outline of the overall structure of The Trinity and the Kingdom of God until the chapter in which it is dealt with at some length. This book contains important material on Moltmann's understanding of the problem of evil. In chapter 2, section 6, "God and Suffering", Moltmann clearly repudiates the notion

that all the evil that has occurred is justifiable. It has seemed at times that if we take this seriously, we will have to give up the idea of a wholly just and loving creator God. But Moltmann evidently believes that this is not so.

To begin with, there is the dramatic statement that: "The suffering of a single innocent child is an irrefutable rebuttal of the notion of an almighty and kindly God in heaven" (TKG p47). That is, "... a God who lets the innocent suffer and who permits senseless death, is not worthy to be called God at all" (ibid). It will help if a number of questions are asked here. First, why might the death of an innocent be an irrefutable rebuttal of the theistic God's existence? Previously, Moltmann argued that a God who does not suffer cannot be a loving God. This problem was related to belief in divine omnipotence, and so to theism. The statement above indicates a new problem for theists: it lies in God's letting the innocent suffer. The problem would seem to be the classic difficulty confronting theodacists: that an all-powerful (or powerful), and, one would assume, wholly good God, would do all that it is possible to do to eliminate evil, and would not permit the circumstances in which an innocent and/or unjustifiable death could occur. If the theodacist's task is seen as hopeless even on the death of a single innocent, we must then ask what makes it possible to believe in the existence (or at least the coherence of the notion of the existence) of a post-theistic God, whose creation is also marked by innocent suffering and death? A God who is also perfectly righteous, wholly good, wholly free. Moltmann himself highlights the destructive awfulness of suffering: "There is no explanation of suffering which is capable of obliterating...pain, and no consolation of a higher wisdom which can

assuage it" (TKG p47). Still, the question remains: what is it that puts Moltmann's God beyond the reach of conventional critique?

In line with the apparent failure to analyse adequately the problems facing theodocists, Moltmann advances an interesting argument on protest atheism, the "rock of atheism" (TKG p48). The argument runs that it is precisely the charge against God which shows that the desire for life and righteousness is what makes suffering what it is. Without a desire for justice there could be no rebellion against the suffering of the innocent. Moltmann is now making a leap from an argument from suffering as evil because contrasting with what is good, to one for the necessary, self-evident existence of God. Thus: "*If there were no God, the world as it is would be all right*" (my emphasis). This is followed by the claim that only the thirst for God "turns suffering into conscious pain". And if one were to counter this by arguing that it is possible to experience pain and anguish without belief in God, or even perhaps because one believes God does not exist, there is an indirect argument against this. For Moltmann holds that "... the atheism for which this world is all there is runs aground on the rock of suffering too. For even the abolition of God does not explain suffering and does not assuage pain" (this sounds like a case for agnosticism). Moltmann has already stated that no higher wisdom can obliterate pain. But atheism does not claim this. Perhaps the focus of attention should be the explanatory aspect. If modified theism is incompatible with innocent suffering, and atheists do not feel compelled to give any reasons as to why the brute reality of a complex universe without a loving God as its creator should not involve the suffering of those beings which evolve within it, what advantages might post-theistic theology have in such a situation?

Moltmann does not attempt to show how God's love is compatible with innocent suffering in the sense that he is in some way responsible, although all will be for the good. Neither does he provide an account which satisfactorily places it beyond the divine responsibility. Still, there are places where even innocent suffering fits in with Moltmann's explanations of divine creativity and trinitarian history. In this way, Moltmann does seem to give some kind of explanation, although, since injunctions against the justification of (unjustifiable) evil are never retracted, confusion must arise over divine intentions. If we take Moltmann at his word, that no theological explanation can be given, then, since non-Christians can arguably give explanations, it is possible to maintain that they have a more plausible position. If it is accepted that there is no undisputed evidence for the world's being created by a being who never permits or does immoral actions (actions whose possibility cannot be justified by causal connection with the logically necessary conditions for higher goods), or that this God is incompatible with the existence of the world as it is, then arguments for the biological basis of behaviour come into their own, as opposed to merely being evidence against the God idea. Here there is no need to resort to theology to explain why human society is not perfect, and is not free from sin. If atheism can explain suffering without God, then part of Moltmann's case is gone. Suffering is not the rock of atheism that Moltmann made it out to be (TKG p48). Instead, it threatens belief in the divine creation of the world by a wholly good God.

On the basis of the finding that theism cannot answer the problem of suffering, nor atheism 'abolish' it, Moltmann outlines the "open-question" of theodicy. If we ask if God is just, we only do so because of our longing for God over against suffering. But against God's being just,

hangs the problem of suffering. This is what Moltmann terms the dialectic of theodicy's open question (TKG p49). He then makes a debatable assertion. These questions of God, and of suffering find a "common answer". For "Either that, or neither of them finds a satisfactory answer at all". The implication seems to be strongly that of an eschatological verification of justification. Thus: "No one can answer the theodicy question in this world, and no one can get rid of it" (ibid). Nevertheless is Moltmann really saying that it can be answered in the next? Clearly not. For humanity is to live with this question of suffering, seeking that future in which "the desire for God will be fulfilled" (ibid). It is the satisfaction of this desire which is primary, and not an answer to a theoretical question. This can be seen in the way Moltmann formulates his dialectic of the theodicy question. The question, is there a just God? - has as its sting, the experience of suffering. But the overall emphasis is on the presence of a just God. It is not the theodicy question as normally understood at all. If God creates a new and sinless, deathless world, then he is just. To ask if there is a logical problem in maintaining that there is a God who is eternally good and loving, and who will create the new creation, is not, it would appear, something which Moltmann would consider, even if there is unjustifiable suffering in the world. Moltmann's question is one about the future, and not about whether an answer on compatibility is possible, and if not, what the consequences might be. He writes of the theodicy question, it:

"... is not a speculative question. It is a critical one. It is the all-embracing eschatological question. it is not purely theoretical, for it cannot be answered with any new theory about the existing world. it is a practical question which will only be answered through the experience of the new world in which 'God will wipe away the tear from their eyes.' It is not really a question at all, in the sense of something we can ask or not ask, like other questions. It is the open wound of life. In this world... The person who believes will not rest content with any slickly explanatory answer to the theodicy question... The more a person believes... the more passionately he asks

about God and the new creation." (TKG p49)

What then of religious theorising about suffering? Moltmann looks at the connections made between sin and suffering and death - from Romans 6:23, to Augustine and the Latin tradition. However, whilst Moltmann is prepared to accept that there are clear links between sin and suffering, these cannot serve as a "universal" explanation of suffering. And it is important for an understanding of Moltmann that the following is noted: "We cannot say, 'if there were no sin, there would be no suffering'" (TKG p50-1). And the succeeding sentences go to the heart of much of Moltmann's theology. Thus:

"Experience of suffering goes far beyond the experience of guilt and the experience of grace. It has its roots in the limitations of created reality itself. If creation-in-the-beginning is open for the history of good *and* evil, then that initial creation is also a creation capable of suffering, and capable of producing suffering." (TKG p51)

An observer of the conventional theodicy debate would ask why the creation is open for good and evil, and with what consequence for the moral status of the creator. Does this openness reflect a possibility for evil necessary in the obtaining of an ultimate overall and justificatory good? Was it within God's power to create a worthwhile state of affairs otherwise than has been (presumably) attempted in this creation? This is a question worth pursuing, since God will be creating such a different state of affairs in the new creation. If so, what were the kind of reasons which made him choose to bring about the world there is? If unjustified suffering or its possibility is not necessary to the God who creates a world free from the negatives, why does it exist? That is, if suffering or its possibility is not necessary, can there be any defence of the justice of a God who reserves a just setting of affairs to a second dispensation, and excludes it from his first? The outlook for any such defence looks bleak.

Moltmann makes a significant move in his discussion of innocent suffering. Innocent suffering is a truly hurtful characteristic of reality. Even with the suffering of the guilty, one can find elements of innocent suffering (TKG p51). Moltmann identifies the connection between guilt and suffering as a moral and judicial link which in fact increases suffering, giving it "permanence through the archaic religious idea of a world order that has been spoilt and has to be restored" (ibid). But it is also said that "the suffering of one person is the guilt of another" (TKG p50). So it seems that the concept of guilt is not necessarily tied to ideas of restoration of a besmirched world, but can be related to knowledge of transgression. Is the idea of connections between spoliation, sin, and guilt, an archaic idea then? If Moltmann thinks it so, then the traditional concept of responsibility and stewardship is undermined. It is responsibility which allows the concept of guilt to persist. Without our misuse of responsibility guilt would be meaningless. If guilt is the corollary of having freely abused responsibility (I am not though defending guilt-complexes, or the unforgiving labelling of individuals), then there is a way in which the responsible individual takes on moral responsibility for their action. I am noting this at some length because I think it important that responsibility has a crucial moral dimension. If this burden or privilege applies to people as free and responsible agents, it will also surely apply to God. In creation, God's actions were free, expressing his nature, and his power to express his nature. Therefore, looking at the concept of divine perfection and responsibility, it seems that the way the world is, is not unintentional on God's part: neither is there a way in which God who is wholly good, morally responsible, can escape the condition that the world be expressive of that fact, and not incompatible with what would make sense of its being true.

Moltmann's statements weaken any idea that he thinks the possibility of evil is one that exists as a corollary of free choice as worthwhile good; of an order of reality where certain acts have undesirable or unholy consequences, and where others are authentically free decisions for the good. Moltmann is not interested in a defence where possibilities of choice for good are free in the sense that we could have chosen otherwise, perhaps even evil. He is though committed to an account of freedom where this is equated with expression of what one is, one's nature (more or less identical with J L Mackie's view). This raises problems. This lack of discussion on the subject of human freedom and evil, is matched in its contribution to unclearness on the question of evil, by the way in which the world and its suffering reflects divine processes which, as such, seem to beg a justificatory defence on the basis of divine responsibility. Moltmann himself holds that "the experience of suffering goes far beyond the question of guilt and innocence, leaving it behind as totally superficial" (ibid). The details and implications of this position will be explored later.

This brings one to the question of love in Moltmann's theology. In theodicy terms, to say that God is love, is to affirm something which complements the idea that he is wholly good. The overlap, and the distinctions could be very complex; it would seem though that perfect love cannot involve anything incompatible with being wholly good. Interestingly, for Moltmann, love sees *only* innocent suffering (ibid). However, there is relatively little sign of his wanting to detail the way in which divine love relates to the origins of unjustifiable evil, the moral implications of this in terms of divine responsibility for a world in which even the perpetrators of evil are presumably innocent sufferers: beings who have become warped, caught up by corrupting forces:

"The desire to explain suffering is already highly questionable in itself. Does an explanation not lead us to justify suffering and give it permanence? Does it not lead the suffering person to come to terms with his suffering, and to declare himself in agreement with it? And does this not mean that he gives up hope of overcoming suffering?" (TKG p52)

Again the critical concerns at the heart of conventional theodicy are not touched on. There seems no possibility that God's being wholly good in the way that he cannot permit or be otherwise responsible for immoral actions is at issue in the theodicy question. Why for instance, if one should not come to terms with one's suffering now, should one ever do so? To understand why Moltmann rejects the idea of an explanation which justifies suffering, of a coming to terms with suffering, it is necessary to look at his idea of creative love. The Trinity and The Kingdom of God has an important section on God's love (p57ff). At this stage I shall only note some of the points which seem to highlight the need for a theodicy, and one or two of those which appear to indicate that Moltmann has a conception of love that renders conventional theodicy unnecessary (whilst undermining his attack on theodicy).

First, love is the communication of the good (TKG p57). It is to be distinguished from 'destructive passions'. Love is life-giving and wants to "open up the freedom to live" (ibid). Importantly for the consideration of other statements on love, Moltmann emphasises its positive nature. As self-communication^m of the good it does not embrace "self-renunciation", nor does it involve "self-dissolution". The lover gives himself to the loved, enters into the other, "but in that other he is entirely himself" (ibid). Again, crucially, "The unselfishness of love lies in the loving person's communication of himself, not in his self-destruction" (ibid). Taking Moltmann up on his definition of love

as positive self-communication of the good raises problems, or so it seems.

We find Moltmann almost immediately describing how love involves self-differentiation. The greater the self-differentiation the more "unselfish" the self-communication: the problematic nature of Moltmann's position on theodicy now becomes evident. That is:

"When we say 'God is love,' then we mean that he is in eternity this process of self-differentiation and self identification; a process which contains the whole pain of the negative in itself." (ibid)

There is an argument which would say that any premium on an unselfish love involving ever greater degrees of self-differentiation, is ultimately selfish. In giving rise to an other who is alien in the sense that relationship to this other involves the whole (unjustifiable) pain of the negative, one is positing the other to fulfill flawed conditions of true love and unselfishness.

One finds Moltmann saying here that the divine love inextricably involves suffering: "creative and suffering love has always been a part of his loves' eternal nature" (TKG p59). Moltmann discusses the theology of C E Rolt with what can only be approval, as part of his treatment of a "remarkable wealth" of English writing on the subject of God and suffering. In fact it is found that: "Rolt shows very well how in world history God's suffering love transforms 'brute force' into 'vital energy'" (TKG p33). Love is "life's pre-eminent organizing principle in the deadly conflict of blind natural forces". And also of Rolt's theology, "God's eternal bliss is not bliss based on the absence of suffering. On the contrary, it is bliss that becomes bliss through suffering's acceptance and transformation" (ibid p34). But arguably, even

transformed suffering, if it is still unjustifiable, cannot be an answer to the theodicy question.

Divine self-humiliation is another inescapable aspect of creative love. This doctrine of self-withdrawal, suffering and humiliation is developed at some length in God and Creation, to which we shall come in due course. In The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, references occur on pages 27-30. They seem to imply that Moltmann has affinities with theodacists such as Richard Swinburne. The dichotomy in God, between the divine life and the activity of suffering along with his people is "based on the pathos and the initial self-humiliation through which the Almighty goes out of himself and becomes involved with the limited world and with the freedom of his image in that world. The freedom of his creatures is seemingly paramount as an expression of love, and this would therefore seem to be an argument in favour of justifying the possibility of moral evil. "Love seeks a counterpart who freely responds" (TKG p30); "Love humiliates itself for the freedom of its counterpart" (ibid); "Love of freedom is the most profound reason for 'God's self-differentiation", and so on (ibid). Moreover, Moltmann continues by writing: "The most moving potentiality of this theology is that it allows us to comprehend the Jewish people's history of suffering as... as the history of the suffering of the tortured divine Shekinah" (ibid). We can see that this does not explain why innocent suffering, which must in part be the corollary of the obvious 'freedom' to inflict suffering, is an argument against the existence of the theist's God in the way that Moltmann earlier claimed. God must see such possibilities as more than counter-balanced by the worthy claims of a genuinely loving relationship with his creatures. If God cannot be thought to think this way, it is arguably impossible for

Moltmann to make pronouncements on the immorality of theodicy. Ideas of God's goodness would also edge towards unintelligibility.

If God decided, prior to creating, that although there will be immense suffering, not all of it the consequence of moral evil, this is to be the counterpart of real freedom and responsibility, both as worthwhile goods (will physical evil be the testing ground for moral responsibility?), then even the worst suffering must be inter-connected with this freedom and responsibility, and therefore fall within the bounds of acceptability. Although requiring a strong concept of justification, this has the strength of attempting to maintain coherence. "'My head is heavy, my arm is heavy", says a Mishnah, talking about the way God suffers with the torments of the hanged" (TKG p30). Now we must ask, what if such torments are not acceptable, morally justifiable, in the sense that we say, 'it is better that such possibilities had never been?' What then? What if the death of a single innocent is truly incompatible with the existence of the almighty and kindly God? What too of the concept of freedom which one would expect to be possible for the image of God, as much as for God himself: that freedom where human beings are truly free to express their deepest nature, as with God in creation? To be a 'piece of fate', and to suffer unjustifiably, is arguably too much for created beings to experience at the hands of, in the world of, a wholly good God - and expect them to affirm that this God is indeed wholly good. As we shall see in the later discussion of The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, human beings are not truly free. This would explain, in part perhaps, why the free will defence is never forwarded.

I conclude this brief look at The Trinity and the Kingdom of God with a final series of quotations. They are important, and a paraphrase would

miss much. Moltmann is elaborating the theme of suffering love. It is difficult to reconcile this stance with the earlier pronouncement on the death of a single innocent child. Moltmann's God is not almighty, but all that exists was, it should be remembered, freely created by him, and he is a God whose deepest nature is self-communication of a good which involves or pre-supposes neither self-d^estruction nor self-dissolution. But if suffering is integral to the life and victory of love in the new creation, then a conventional justificatory theodicy seems more clearly in order than ever. God is not, so far as we know, wrestling with elemental forces in an eternal dualistic conflict. God is responsible for permitting and enabling suffering, and God is wholly good. God is also free, not under duress, under pressure or constraints which would thwart him in creating something which expresses his deepest nature. Does this not mean that the evil that occurs is ultimately not of a kind that it would have been better to eliminate as a possibility? Surely the closer suffering is to the life of spirit, the more deeply we can affirm that it is in fact interlocked with good. Moltmann argues as follows:

"Creative love is ultimately suffering love because it is only through suffering that it acts creatively and redemptively for the freedom of the beloved. Freedom can only be made possible by suffering love. The suffering of God with the world, the suffering God from the world, and the suffering of God for the world are the highest forms of his creative love, which desires free fellowship with the world and free response in the world." (TKG p60)

Then:

"This means that the creation of the world and human beings for freedom and fellowship is always bound up with the process of God's deliverance from the sufferings of his love. His love, which liberates, delivers and redeems through suffering, wants to reach its fulfilment in the love that is bliss... In this sense, not only does God suffer with and for the world; liberated men and women suffer with God and for him." (ibid)

And:

"The theology of God's passion leads to the idea of God's self-subjection to suffering. It therefore also has to arrive at the idea of God's eschatological self-deliverance. Between these two movements lies the history of the profound fellowship between God and man in

suffering - in compassionate suffering with one another, and in passionate love for one another." (ibid)

So far as this theodicy investigation is concerned, there is little information here which would go to resolve decisively questions about the origin and necessity, or non-necessity of suffering in Moltmann's theology (suggestive though the passages may be). Suffering would however seem to be compatible with God's nature as love, and the passages tend to hint, if no more than this, that it is part of the process of divine love of the other; though whether the full pain of the negative previously referred to is truly part of a pattern of divine movement, and, crucially, incorporates unjustifiable evils, is not clear. More on this later. I will now look briefly at ideas of justification in The Church and the Power of the Spirit, and in God and Creation.

In The Church in the Power of the Spirit, we find a portrayal of a suffering creation. Why there is such suffering, and the moral issues of theodicy, are issues it is difficult to find a clear position on, at least at this stage. When talking of Christ's death under the law, the law is described in a way which blurs the responsibility for its being the way it is. It appears in fact to be simply part of the structure or system within which humans have to exist. Law is understood as the foundation of the systems of existence with which "people try to defend themselves politically and psychologically against chaos, evil and death, yet by so doing disseminate chaos evil and death at the same time" (TCPS p88). Here one asks if human beings are fully responsible for this situation, for following that law which, as Moltmann states, "humanity in its misery has taken up". Why has it taken up this law? Moltmann is consistent in his language of liberation and feasts (TCPS p104ff), but gives little to clarify the nature of the evil and deprivation which

necessitates the law and the freeing of humanity. The notion of indwelling is an idea that reflects Moltmann's belief that God was in some sense not fully with his creation in the beginning (ibid and p102). Thus: "... the indwelling of the divine glory in all beings brings protection against futility, chaos and wickedness, [so] earthly protective measures and human repressions become superfluous and void. Then freedom is fulfilled in the sphere of the new creation free of all dominion" (ibid). More on this later.

One also finds a further emphasis on the positive aspect of suffering, something which goes some way to countering the portrayal of innocent suffering as so wicked as to make the existence of the theistic God inconceivable. Perhaps moral wickedness is often unjustifiably wicked, but at least some of the suffering stemming from this field of great (apparent) freedom and responsibility seems beneficial. Thus: "people who are now capable of acting must rediscover the meaning of suffering. It is only the dignity of solidarity in suffering which makes people capable of fellowship" (TCPS p167). Moltmann criticises the Western striving to reduce suffering. For "The ideal of life without suffering makes one group of people apathetic and brutal towards other groups, which are supposed to pay the price" (ibid). There are in fact "limits to the conquest of suffering" (ibid). This means that there "can only be an equal and just distribution of the burden of suffering that cannot be overcome" (ibid). So, suffering that cannot be overcome looks as if it is built into the system. And it appears to be that there are restrictions on how far progress can be made, short of the in-breaking of the new creation. Only the new creation can bring actual final freedom from the negatives of sin and death (TCPS p195). I would argue that these limitations, and God's knowledge of them, since suffering is part of the

eternal nature of his love, make it seem reasonable that this bedrock potentiality for suffering of the most extreme kinds, be justifiable. Here we can try looking at this issue of justifiability and compatibility in two ways.

First, God loves. Yet love is not something which turns from the making possible of states of affairs where suffering of a non-justifiable nature occurs. God loves, and is also, with the best intentions, immoral. That is, he does that which is incompatible with being wholly good. One can see how this might be so, by looking back at the Trinity and the Kingdom of God, and the concept of open system, one which surfaces again in God in Creation. Moltmann writes, interpreting the old testament understanding of creation: "It is a creation open to time, open to the future, and open to change. It is an 'open system', full of every potentiality. Consequently it also has to be understood as a threatened world: it is surrounded by chaos. The powers of corruption reach into the midst of it, in night and the sea" (TKG p100: see also p190). This openness, or potentially deadly ambiguity where a straightforward communication and sharing of the good might instead be expected, is reflected in the following words from The Church in the Power of the Spirit: "... the new life in the spirit of freedom has a fragmentary form. *This form cannot be identified with the general ambiguity of history and the ambivalence of all historical activity*, but is the particular ambiguity of historical experience and practice between life and death" (TCPS p196: my emphasis).

One potentiality which has been realised is death, which is, as we shall see, a principal evil in Moltmann's order of things. By the conclusion of this study it should be evident that it's realisation is rooted in the

fundamental structure of reality. It is nevertheless something opposed to God, and where the unjustifiable death of a single innocent is enough to end theism, it must be considered problematic for the coherence of Moltmann's own theology as well: "The Son is given over to the power of this death, a power contrary to God" (TCPS p95). Death is, or has been, a great force which once established began to be exerted destructively in the world, even if that dominion is broken: "As the church now understands it, with Jesus' resurrection from the dead the power of death and all the domination built up on the power of death have already been overthrown and their end is already in sight" (TCPS p99). It appears that death is a consequence of human behaviour: "The 'body of death' does not only mean physical death; it also means a deadly cohesion to which all life belongs. This cohesion has been broken in principle, but not yet in fact, through liberation from the power of sin" (TCPS p195). In this case it is hard to see how God could not know the potential destructiveness of human misbehaviour, the connection with death, and the way it would be exerted - the way in which we could almost say it would begin to exert its corrupting power by its own dreadful negativity (now without any pretence to just inter-relationship with human freedom and responsibility). It is evident that God does not act to eliminate the possibilities in his creation for unjustifiable evil. If death of the innocent is abhorrent and presumably always unjustifiable, and we include the 'natural' world's universal and inbuilt patterns of decay as the destruction of innocents, then this initial possibility of death, and its present certainty for all, is puzzling. If all death subsequent to the inbreaking of the power of sin which establishes it as an inescapable feature of existence, is in some deep sense, the death of an innocent, the implications for Moltmann's God as being wholly good, seem threatening.

Second, one could argue that conventional notions of responsibility, proportionate goods and evils, have to be abandoned. God cannot, and does not bear a moral responsibility for what he has created, and the way it has evolved, even if the suffering that occurs is not fully the responsibility of created agents. But if the idea of responsibility does not apply to God, who is the creator, the being who acts, or has acted with the highest degree of freedom, why should it apply to lesser, less free finite agents? And if being wholly good or loving does not exclude certain things: the possibility of unjustifiable evils (as if a genuine evil could be justifiable, or so this has seemed questionable from Moltmann's perspective), how can ideas such as 'good' and 'loving' retain their meaning: an old problem. We are back with the problem facing the theodocist, which in fact makes theodicy arguably so necessary. I will turn now to God in Creation, to see in a preliminary fashion if this major work has much to say on the *nature* of the problem of evil. I will conclude by looking briefly at his article on theodicy in the new SCM Dictionary of Theology.

God in Creation is characterised by a desire to see God as deeply involved in, immanent in, the world (CG p13ff). God animates his creatures, guides them towards the future. Here, "Creation is... the differentiated presence of God the Spirit, the presence of the One in the many" (CG p14). God's relationship to the world is an intricate network of "unilateral, reciprocal and many-sided relationships" (ibid). There is no room for an antithetical setting of God and creation with a trinitarian doctrine of creation. Still, there is tension in God's creative activity. God is in creation, but he stands "over against his creation," and thus against himself (GC p15). Moltmann uses two concepts to comprehend this element of tension and self-differentiation.

The doctrine of *shekinah*, which also appears in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, and a doctrine of the trinity. In the doctrine of *shekinah*, God suffers with the suffering of the creatures he has created. In the doctrine of the trinity, God goes out of himself freely, in the "overflowing rapture of his love". Moltmann states that: "The overflowing love from which everything comes that is from God, is also the implicit ground for God's readiness to endure the contradictions of the beings he has created" (GC p15). Here we have the problem of evil highlighted. Love is good. God creates out of love, but has to endure the (unjustifiable) suffering that arises within his creation (which he only can do because his love is so profound and perfect, whole). God creates beings, and endures their contradictions. From whence do these contradictions come? Are they generated after creation from already existing contradictions which are necessarily part of the created order if it is to be free, or moving towards freedom? Are they of a kind which is incompatible with the creation of the world by a perfectly good and wholly loving agent? Or are they compatible after all? If they are, then their possible consequences must be compatible with God's being wholly good, and where the problem of evil is retained as a genuine problem, that arguably means that in any positive answer, the evil that occurs must be held to be justifiable (it being concepts of goodness and justice which generate the question). Or is this kind of thinking irrelevant? We find that: "The evolutions and catastrophes of the universe are also the movements and experiences of the Spirit of creation... That is why the divine Spirit transcends himself in all created beings" (GC p16). With this kind of statement it looks as if suffering is somehow intrinsic to God's creation, and that Moltmann has succeeded in retaining the power of the question as a motor for hope, transcending those issues which formerly gave it real intellectual

significance. I do not think he has yet shown that these issues are satisfactorily handled in his approach.

I move to chapter four of God in Creation, entitled God the creator (ibid p73ff). Creation is brought into being through the exercise of the free will of God (GC p75). Emanationism is rejected because it compromises this free will. Yet Moltmann wants to avoid the impression that God's creative act is arbitrary. God has created freely, out of his love, the love that is his essential nature. God's love is engaged in the communication of goodness. He creates what is different to him, but that which also corresponds. For Moltmann, this involves God in "unheard of condescension, self-limitation and humiliation" (GC p78). The critic may ask if the possibilities for Auschwitz implicit, as it turns out, in this creative act, are adequately dealt with by a theology of condescension and self-humiliating love on the part of the God "who is incomparable"; the God for whom "heaven and earth are neither divine nor demonic, neither eternal like God himself, nor meaningless and futile. They are contingent. They are his goodly work in which he has his pleasure. No more than that, but no less than that either" (GC p73).

If God is to be responsible for his actions, he has to be free. Free to manifest his nature. This means that his love, his essential nature is communicated in creation. For it to be otherwise would imply that the act of creation could be an arbitrary one, sundered from his essential nature. So if God parents freely, and creation is utterly contingent on his nature, and his nature is to love, and communicate the good, then to speak of his self-condescension and humiliation is to do so in a special sense, one free from images of destructive subjection to independent forces: God creates and what he creates is good. So humiliation,

referring to bringing low to the earth or ground (but usually implying degradation), is unique of God in respect to creating, since unlike the humiliation, or self-humiliation of contingent human beings, there is neither corrupted environment or broken society. It is humiliation in an entirely free, loving, and good sense. It may well be that creating the world has involved a tremendous act of self-alienation. But what if the sense of self-humiliation in this creative and sustaining act is related to a dire level of unjustifiable abjectness amongst the creaturely possibilities towards which God is knowingly lowering himself, will be continuing to lower himself, even if willingly? If it is, then I do not see how we can reasonably say this God is wholly good and just. For if the humiliation, and all that is implied in this, is something God does most freely and in fullest self-correspondence, it seems it should be positive self-humiliation (loving lowering into the good finite), and step towards self-fulfilment involving good proportionate to evil.

But how aware is Moltmann of the well grounded conventional expectations of divine justice and goodness? Take for instance the following statements. We can view the eternal life of God, as "a life of eternal infinite love, which in the creative process issues in its overflowing rapture from its trinitarian perfection and completeness" (GCp84). This picture is profoundly complicated by another statement following soon after. Talking of the doctrine of *zimzum*,⁹ Moltmann explores the implications of the *nihil* which is opened up in the space left by the self-contraction of the being of God:

"The *nihil* in which God creates his creation is God-forsakenness, hell, absolute death; and it is against the threat of this that he maintains his creation in life. Admittedly the *nihil* only acquires this character through the self-isolation of created beings to which we give the name of sin and godlessness." (GC p88)

The questions which come in here concern the extent to which creatures

are responsible for their actions, and to what extent their wrong actions are magnified by the existence of creation in an abyss of Godforsakenness.¹⁰ That is, would genocide or physical death be possible without the presence of the *nihil*? The *nihil*, if it is not absolute death, and so on, is certainly potentially so. If human beings are not fully free, is one to wonder that their choices are not always for the right. That is, if we take freedom in the 'Mackiean' sense of freedom to express one's nature (as Moltmann seems to do; but see the discussion in chapter seven of this study), then the nature of humanity cannot be wholly loving and rational, since it is clear that human beings have chosen wrongly. Some would anyway say this concept of freedom is misguided: it is only a pseudo-freedom. If we take a concept of freedom where one is free to choose otherwise than one did (but to rationally choose evil?), then it may be that this full freedom has been abused. But humanity is not fully free, or so Moltmann has said (this is a general theological problem: in Moltmann's case the emphasis on the enslavement and bondage of all creation must raise doubts as to what genuine freedom and responsibility really means in this world: see for example GC p68-9). Therefore the wrong choices that exist cannot be ascribed to a freedom in existence which we can be sure would have always allowed one the possibility at the moment of choice to rationally choose otherwise than one did, nor to a free expression of one's created nature as Moltmann describes the divine freedom, unless this nature is by nature corrupt. So sin then seems to stem from inadequacy. But this is an unsatisfactory regress when the question of unjustifiable evil and responsibility is being debated. I leave more detailed discussion of the role of the *nihil* in bringing about such evil until chapter eight. Attempts to analyse this type of problem raised by Moltmann's theology will perhaps always be fraught with difficulty.

The following remarks exemplify a particular approach to questions of evil and justification which require a clear and consistent exposition:

"... the experiences of Auschwitz and Hiroshima raise questions for which no answers are endurable, because the questions are fundamentally protests. Even Hegel found that there was a Negative which could not 'be turned to good' in any dialectic. He therefore left the 'unresolved contradiction'... out of his dialectic altogether. Ernst Bloch too was able to see nothing in the incinerators of Maidanek... the passion for life cannot do away with the death that is utterly meaningless."

But, paradoxically, from the theodacists position, the statement continues:

This idea of the negative is really Manichean. It cannot do more than 'keep Nothingness at bay.' It cannot abolish or overcome it... The hope of resurrection therefore brings even the Nothingness of world history into the light of the new creation. [but] ... The protest against annihilating Nothingness must not lead to the suppression and forgetfulness of the annihilated; and equally, hope for the annihilated must not permit us to come to terms with their annihilation. [however] ... Even 'the end of the world' can set no limits to the God who created the world out of nothing, the God who in his own Son exposed his own self to annihilating Nothingness on the cross, in order to gather that Nothingness into his eternal being. And this is true whether the end of the world is brought about by natural catastrophe or human crime. How should the Creator-out-of-nothingness be diverted from his intention and his love through any devastations in what he has created?" (GC 92-3)

Here Moltmann shows a veritable gulf between his articulation of the problems, and that found in conventional theodicy debate. Moltmann, in indirect fashion, is clearly accepting what Hegel and Bloch have to say on the meaningless of certain suffering. It cannot be fitted into a dialectic: it is meaningless and purposeless. It can never be come to terms with. Or is that we are never to come to terms with the annihilation of peoples whilst they are still dead, and before their resurrection? What precisely would constitute coming to terms? The problem of God's righteousness has usually involved coming to terms with the suffering of the innocent, or even of all creation, when the creator is wholly good and perfectly free. As J C A Gaskin argued, "innocent suffering stands for all time as innocent" (ibid). That is, if we refuse

to accept that suffering experienced involuntarily and without its being 'deserved', whether of moral or physical type, is not excusable or intelligible on grounds of its being causally connected with exercise of noble characteristics such as sympathy, nursing of the dying, or by connection with the opportunity of people to choose freely, even if sometimes wrongly, then we cannot come to terms with it, ever. On the other hand, Moltmann's final sentence above seems almost callous. One has called to mind the shades of Hegel's problematic statement in the Lectures on the Philosophy of History, which certainly seems to go a long way to incorporating great evil into the dialectic:

"World History occupies a higher ground than that on which morality has properly its position, which is personal character and the conscience of individuals... Moral claims which are irrelevant must not be brought into collision with world-historical deeds... The litany of private virtues... must not be raised against them." (op.cit. p70: trans by J Sibree, London, 1902)

Moltmann's attitude to the theodicy question is highlighted in his article 'Theodicy', for the new SCM Dictionary of Theology. He characterises the theodicy found in enlightenment protestant orthodoxy thus. Evil was set in the context of God's overall rule of the universe. Hence: "God allows evil without endorsing it; he directs evil so that it brings about good; he sets limits to evil and will overcome it in the end.... God permits moral evil for the sake of the freedom of the human will and uses physical evils to punish and educate" (DT p565). But Moltmann rejects this. With the Lisbon earthquake Europe rightly reacted against such optimistic models of the world. It is stated: "where tens of thousands die a senseless death, all theodicy turns to lies" (ibid).

Equally important is his outlining of three questions facing theology after Auschwitz. First, the issue of the justification of God in the face of evil "cannot be answered, but it can never be abandoned." Secondly,

post-Auschwitz theology has to understand the theology "in Auschwitz." God was the companion of those suffering in Auschwitz, thus he "gives up hope where no more can be hoped for." Thirdly: "The question of theodicy remains open until a new creation, in which God's righteousness dwells, gives the answer." The first and third points reflect difficulties found in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God and which have been noted previously. It calls the question unanswerable, but not to be abandoned: further, it is one that is finally answerable (in an affirmative way, one presumes). Is this a coherent stance? That is, why is it unanswerable, and what are the implications? If it is unanswerable because all theodicy moves are blatantly failures in attempting to justify the unjustifiable, say the death of the innocent, then is Moltmann saying there is a justificatory case after all? But if all theodicy genuinely "turns to lies", and theodicy is justification argued on a definitely limited number of options, then the question genuinely is unanswerable. So Moltmann actually rejects the possibility of justification of suffering, whilst maintaining the conventional form and importance of the question which arises from this demand.

The only answer to the continued putting of the theodicy question would appear to be that this is a misguided activity. That the evil that occurs is genuinely evil and without the kind of tie-ups to second order goods that would be expected of a God who was going to create a world where his abundant love and wholeness would be fully and freely expressed, and where suffering was to be a possibility.

It has turned out that evil is a realised possibility; and God must have known that the innocent would die. But the conventional theodicist would probably say that if we reject the idea that there are justificatory

links between this possibility and necessary conditions for freedom, solidarity, and so on, then God is guilty of having permitted or actively encouraged wholly undesirable evil to arise: evil so bad in itself that the goods with which it is apparently causally connected, such as freedom, can in no way be said to justify the (as it is increasingly evident) concomitant evil. Since such unjust and destructive suffering is contradictory to God's nature and intentions, it therefore would have been better for God to have refrained from creating. Therefore it seems that if Moltmann is saying that the theodicy question cannot be answered affirmatively, its final resolution cannot really lie in the new creation. The new creation will either eternally beg the question of past suffering by its starkly contrasting wholeness; or be the occasion of a 'slick' theodicy answer where the ghastly evil that has occurred is justified, integrated into the scheme of things.

Moltmann writes "The question of God lives on in an irresistible hunger for righteousness" (ibid). Nevertheless, the fact that the nature of the thirst and hunger appears irreconcilable with the divine righteousness which is its object is problematic: for God has created the world which is its pre-requisite, a world is marked by evil for which there can be no justification. With a senseless death, as we have seen, "... all theodicy turns to lies". Yet, as we will see, and do so increasingly, this rejection of theodicy does not always fit comfortably with world images which Moltmann presents (passages from God in Creation):

"In play, the world displays its beauty. As play, the world hovers over the abyss. That is why the kingdom of the world belongs to the child... It is only in play that human beings can endure the fundamental contingency of the world... In play they weigh up the chances of a fortuitous world and the forces of their own freedom. The kingdom of freedom is the kingdom of play." (GC p310)

And:

"The deeply felt contingency of the world in general, and the continually experienced contingency of events in the world, lose their terrors for the human being if he sees them as part of the great game which is being played with the world in its evolution, and with himself in the history of his own life. It may often seem a cruel game, unless he can put his trust in providence." (GC p311)

Keeping still to this book, God in Creation, Moltmann has written: "... hope for the annihilated must not permit us to come to terms with their annihilation" (GC p92). If this is truly so, then their murder is an event for which God can have had no purpose, which can never be meaningful; never have been connected in the divine mind with goods and characteristics in creation whose benefits and quality were to be seen as balanced against real and shameful possibilities flowing from these same characteristics. For what if they were so considered? Either they were morally outweighed and justified by their causal connection with the existence of otherwise unobtainable second order goods; or they were not so justified. This second eventuality has two possible implications. Suffering is meaningless in the sense that it is of no account to God as real pain, real agony, darkness. Therefore to enter it a debit against the 'good' is not conceivable. Or, God is aware of the real agony of suffering and death, which is surely what Moltmann does say, but no connection is to be made between the ordeal of the passion, and the suffering of creatures, and the position of responsibility, foresight, wisdom occupied by the God who would never permit that which is evil to happen (normally, without justification). This second position is completely unconstructive, and as problematic as the first. It would represent an arguably useless and failed bracketing of the problem. These then are some of the issues which will have to be looked at closely. Their importance is highlighted when one asks if meaningless death is compatible with God's creating a world where there is suffering, when:

"There is no dark side to God - no side where he could also be conceived of as the destroyer of his creation and of his own being as Creator. If God is himself supreme goodness and truth, then the

wealth of his potentialities is determined by his essential nature. 'All things are possible with God' does not mean his undetermined omnipotence; it means the determined power of his goodness" (GC p169).

Strangely, there does seem at times 'pre-liminary' air about creation which may explain suffering, and *de facto* allow us to integrate it into God's plans for creation. Although "God is the actor and producer of the world's drama" (GC p309), this is not a play wholly centred on the present reality. For: "Creation is more than merely a stage for God's history with men and women. The goal of this history is the consummation of creation in its glorification" (GC p56). Perhaps this could mean that the 'determined power' of God's goodness in its creating of an evolutionary universe is compatible with the existence of meaningless death. How in Moltmann's theology this actually appears to be assumed to be so in places is something which we will explore. I would argue that it is an untenable position if God is believed to be wholly good.

CHAPTER FOUR

In the last chapter I looked at the way in which Moltmann formally approaches the theodicy problem. It appears that his perspective differs from that of those involved in mainstream theodicy debate. The implications of this difference soon become evident in the way in which his theology develops. In this chapter, and those following, I will attempt to describe and analyse Moltmann's positions on divine love and suffering through discussion of key texts. Starting with Theology of Hope, Religion Revolution and the Future, and Hope and Planning. Moving then to The Crucified God, and (very briefly) The Church in The Power of The Spirit. Then to The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, and finally, God in Creation. In discussing each text I keep to the following framework. Topics will be looked at as they relate to a specific line of enquiry: how does Moltmann conceive of divine love/ righteousness? And is there any incompatibility between suffering and this love. Also, what is the nature of the incompatibility between his visions of divine and cosmic history and 'conventional' views of divine goodness and responsibility? I believe that this approach will permit a concise and justifiable assessment of Moltmann's handling of the problem of evil to be made. It allows his views on the theodicy question, and those of others, to be set alongside the substance of his developing thought on the nature of the suffering of the infinite and finite, and of the divine righteousness.

I have followed the chronological order of texts so that developments are seen in sequence. Each presentation and critical discussion is of course aimed at giving a fair impression of the texts central or most relevant characteristics as they stand in relation to the crucial issues of righteousness and suffering.

THEOLOGY OF HOPE

"From first to last, and not merely in epilogue,
Christianity is eschatology, is hope." (T/H p16)

An idea of the order of approach Moltmann takes to the subject of this book will clearly be found in the chapter headings. Since the text is (selectively) presented chapter by chapter, its governing ideas and the ways in which they are developed will hopefully soon become evident. There are two central themes which emerge, and which are relevant to the theodicy question. They are: (a) Moltmann's understanding of the 'God of Promise' - and the nature and content of the promise. For instance, the way in which the risen Christ reveals the 'future horizon' of creation. (b) And inextricably linked to this, his identification of the as yet all-pervasive negativity in this creation. These issues dominate his Theology of Hope.

Theology of Hope was sub-titled "On the Grounds and on the Implications of a Christian Eschatology." A principal understanding was that eschatology must play a central role in theology. Thus:

"The eschatological is not one element of Christianity, but it is the medium of Christian faith as such... For Christian faith lives from the raising of the crucified Christ, and strains after the promises of the universal future of Christ." (TH p16)

Also:

"There is therefore only one real problem in Christian theology, which its own object forces upon it and which it in turn forces on mankind and on human thought: the problem of the future." (ibid)

And:

"The God spoken of here [Molt. is referring to the biblical tradition] is no intra-worldly or extra-worldly God, but the 'God of Hope' (Rom. 15:13), a God with 'future as his essential nature' (as E Bloch puts it), as made known in Exodus and in Israelite prophecy... A proper theology would therefore have to be constructed in the light of its future goal. Eschatology should not be its end, but its beginning." (ibid)

Despite this, Moltmann felt that eschatology had become marginalised. Christian hopes' real power of hope had been understood, or rather welcomed only by fanatical sects, whilst in the mainstream of the post-Constantinian Church it "led a peculiarly barren existence at the end of Christian dogmatics"; hope had "emigrated" from the Church (T/H p15). And, perhaps ironically, considering Moltmann's own tendencies to deprive the world of justificatory goodness, it is said that those millenarianists having hopes of the following kind, pursued an unfruitful and damaging eschatology:

"... the return of Christ in universal glory, the judgement of the world... the new creation of all things. These end events were to break into this world from somewhere beyond history... But the relegating of these events to the 'last day' robbed them of their directive, uplifting, and critical significance for all the days which are spent here, this side of the end, in history." (T/H p15)

He stipulates that eschatology should never wander off into speculation, and must be seen married to christology. Rather than being the predictable, the future is about the new. Thus the future of reality is indistinguishable from that of Christ. In addition:

"... the question whether all statements about the future are grounded in the person and history of Jesus Christ provides it with the touchstone by which to distinguish the spirit of eschatology from that of utopia." (T/H p17)

In his initial pages Moltmann also introduces one to the harsh reality of a contradiction in existence: a contradiction which remains in place in "history", this side of the eschaton:

"Present and future, experience and hope, stand in contradiction to each other in Christian eschatology with the result that man is... drawn into conflict between hope and experience." (TH p18)

And:

"Everywhere in the New Testament the Christian hope is directed towards what is not yet visible; it is consequently a 'hoping against hope' and thereby brands the visible realm of present experience as a god-forsaken transient reality that is to be left behind." (ibid)

Life lived in decay and despair is contradicted by the hope held out in

the life of the resurrected Christ, an ever-present theme. And: "To believe does in fact mean to... be engaged in an exodus" (T/H p19). Likewise, eschatology "... must formulate its statements of hope in contradiction to our present experience" (ibid). And "... this happens in a way that does not suppress or skip the unpleasant realities. Death is real death, and decay is putrefying decay" (ibid). Indeed: "Guilt remains guilt and suffering remains... a cry to which there is no ready-made answer. Faith does not overstep these realities into a heavenly utopia... It can overstep the bounds of life, with their closed wall of suffering, guilt and death, only at the point where they have actually been broken through" (ibid). So, it is only in the light of Christ's victory over death that anything can be hoped for. Faith in Christ, and what has become of him, is the ground for hope, and faith without hope is: "fainthearted and ultimately a dead faith." Moltmann 'earths' this faith:

"In this [eschatological] hope the soul does not soar above our vale of tears to some imagined heavenly bliss... For in the words of Ludwig Feuerbach, it puts 'in place of the beyond that lies above our grave in heaven, the beyond that lies beyond our grave on earth, the historic future, the future of mankind.'" (TH p21)

Yet, perhaps not so differently after all: =

"... on the other hand, all this must inevitably mean that the man who thus hopes will never be able to reconcile himself with the laws and constraints of this earth... Those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is, but begin to suffer under it, to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict with the world, for the goad of the promised future stabs inexorably into the flesh of every unfulfilled present." (ibid)

Such radical and subversive hope contradicts and disturbs human society, which attempts to "stabilize itself as a 'continuing city'". This is a hope which is oppressed by, and contradicts this "world of death" (T/H p21) This sense of mortality as radically bad finitude is a definitive feature of Moltmann's theology, as we shall come to see (its negation is

an essential part of his understanding of the universalisation and intensification of the promise).

The discussion "Does Hope Cheat Man of the Happiness of the Present" (T/H p26ff), introduces the characteristic criticism of the presence of the eternal in the present. Attempts to live the "present" without seeking its transformation in a genuinely eschatological faith are linked to thinking in terms of the "epiphany of the eternal present". Parmenides is given some prominence: "The god of Parmenides is 'thinkable', because he is the eternal, single fullness of being. The non-existent, the past and the future, however, are not 'thinkable'" (T/H p28). But "The 'now' and 'today' of the new Testament is a different thing from the 'now' of the eternal presence of being in Parmenides, for it is a 'now' and an 'all of a sudden' in which the newness of the promised future is lit up and seen in a flash..." (TH p31).

It is held that: "Only in the perspective of this God can there possibly be a love that is more than *philia*, love to the existent and the like - namely *agape*, love to the non-existent, love to the unlike, the unworthy, to the lost, the transient and the dead; a love that can take upon it the annihilating effects of pain and renunciation because it receives its power from hope of a *creation ex nihilo*" (T/H p31-2). I shall discuss this reliance on the new creation as the expression of God's righteousness in in due course.

The second, and particularly the third chapter with its discussion of Christ, examine the ground of the theology of hope. In chapter two ("Promise and History") Moltmann states that he wants the Old Testament to "pose the problem" of revelation, and provide the answers. An approach

differentiating Old Testament thinking from other traditions is adopted. Comparison is made between religions of "Epiphany" and "Promise". Settled peasant religion in the orient was, like the faith of the Caananite, one of "epiphany gods that sanctify land, life and culture" (T/H p97). Moltmann is not, ultimately, concerned whether particular epiphany religions are mediated, polytheistic, or pantheistic. It is enough that they have a basic similarity in the emphasis which they put on the phenomenon of self-disclosure; the epiphanies are in themselves central features of the religion, granting man and his culture "correspondence" with, and "participation" in the eternal cosmos of the divine (T/H p99).

Against this, the experience of the Israelites is notable for one reason: as nomads, their experience was that of a God who journeyed with them. Here: "'The goal gives meaning to the journey and its distresses; and today's decision to trust in the call of God is a decision pregnant with future. This is the essence of promise in the light of transmigration'" (ibid - quoting from V Maag 'Malkût Jhwh' VT Suppl. VII. 1960 p140). Thus it is the concept of promise which is most adequate to describing the heart of the faith of Israel. The history 'initiated' by the promise breaks the cyclical nature of reality.³ In contemporary terms:

"It is not evolution, progress and advance that separate time into yesterday and tomorrow, but the word of promise cuts into events and divides reality into one reality which is passing and can be left behind, and another which must be expected and sought." (T/H p103)

God's promise is such that in the human experience, disappointment takes on a new aspect:

"It is ultimately not the delays in the fulfilment and in the parousia that bring men disappointment. 'Disappointing experiences' of this kind are superficial and trite and come of regarding the promise in legalistic abstraction... Man's hopes and longings and desires, once awakened by specific promises stretch further than any fulfilment

that can be conceived or experienced." (T/H p105)

The human spirit, once fired by the strength of God's promise is existentially integrated with the dynamic of "overplus" (T/H p106). For we "remain restless and urgent, seeking and searching beyond all experiences of fulfilment, and the latter leaves us an aftertaste of sadness" (ibid). We are gratefully orientated towards an horizon of expectation, drawing upon the inexhaustibility of God - who is never expended in "any historic reality", but rests only in that which is fully correspondent with himself (T/H p106).

The God who is revealed in this history of the promise and the overplus, moving gradually towards fulfilment, is not in the nature of a "transcendant Super-Ego". This God does not maintain an optional relation to his creation. His revelation is one of faithfulness to self in the outworking of promises to the creation, and his name stands as a surety that he is faithful to this promise. This hope in the fulfilment of God's promises is not limited to the future of the person of God, although clearly there will be no future without God. Creation as a whole is always included in the spectrum of this hope (T/H p119).

What of present alienation from God? Moltmann states: "The God who is present in his promises is for the human spirit an ob-ject (*Gegen-stand*) in the sense that he stands opposed to (*entgegen-steht*) the human spirit until a reality is created and becomes knowable which wholly accords with his promises and can be called 'very good'" (T/H p120). Again, as we shall see, this kind of thinking is potentially highly problematic when such alienation from God in the reality of the created world is held to generate unjustifiable suffering.

Following from the provisionality of things, the laws of the covenant are read as "injunctions that are bound up with the promise" (T/H p124). The entire range of present human activities, values, hopes, is to be seen as lying under the expectation of radical transformation. The law itself has "as much a future tenor as the promises" (T/H p122). It is open for transformation, as its goal is the human dignity which comes through fellowship with the God of promise (T/H p122).

Discussing the relationship of the prophets and their eschatological conceptions of promise to the "historifying of the cosmos" in apocalyptic eschatology, Moltmann explores the growth of the universal horizon of hope central in his theology. Two events are specially relevant to understanding the growth of eschatological beliefs in the classical period of prophecy. First, as we have seen, the survival of a promissory faith despite settlement in Canaan, and then, the experiences of the 7th and 6th centuries, in which "faith in the promise undergoes tremendous expansion" (T/H p127). The judgement of Yahweh over his people implied the subjugators were his too, he their Lord and Judge. The "coming salvation of Yahweh" enters the dimension of the eschatological. The eschatologies are "Israelo-centric" (T/H p130), but extended to all, and thus incapable of being seen as purely a return to the beginning.

Alongside the prospect of God's rule over all peoples, there gradually developed the idea of the negation of death as "intensification" of the promise (T/H p132). Concomitant with Moltmann's enthusiasm for this, his assessment of apocalyptic's eschatological content is positive:

"This historifying of the world in the category of the universal eschatological future is of tremendous importance for theology... Without apocalyptic a theological eschatology remains bogged down in the ethnic history of men or the existential history of the individual." (T/H p137-8)

Indeed, although apocalyptic tended to a fatalist cosmological eschatology, it marked the beginning of an eschatological cosmology, even an "eschatological ontology". The hope for history would "set the cosmos in motion" (T/H p137). And:

"In a struggle of this kind eschatology naturally suffers serious losses. Yet we must not look only at these, but must also see what is gained in them. The 'universe' is no longer, as in pagan cosmology, a thing to be interpreted in astro-mythical terms... Instead, it splits into aeons in the apocalyptic process - into a world that is coming and one that is passing away... Not only the martyrs are included in the eschatological suffering of the Servant of God, but the whole creation... The suffering becomes universal and destroys the all-sufficiency of the cosmos, just as the eschatological joy will then resound in 'a new heaven and a new earth'". (T/H p137)

This then is a summary of the way in which Moltmann paints the onward nature of the promise in the history of Israel; opening horizons, giving every present the potential for radical re-interpretation in the light of the future. The distinctive feature is that the dimension of over-plus in the promise has allowed the rise of a cosmic eschatological history. And, crucially: "The New Testament did not close the window which apocalyptic had opened for it towards the wide vistas of the cosmos and beyond the limitations of the given cosmic reality" (T/H p138).

Future promise is pivotal in Moltmann's understanding of the "revelation of God in Christ" (T/H p140). Thus "Christology... deteriorates if the dimension of the 'future' of Christ' is not regarded as a constitutive element in it" (ibid). However, the importance of the future horizon of promise is threatened from two fronts. One, already noted, is the "Greek" approach of divine immutability, the other the "modern", where the nature of man is understood from the historic character of his existence. These ideas may not be incompatible with Old Testament traditions, but they are "universals". Properly, one starts with the particular existence of this man Jesus, and then works to the universal.

His response to threats of stabilisation in regard to a fixed divine reality, or to emphasis on historicity, is to argue that: "We take the past promises up into our own eschatological future as disclosed by the gospel, and give them breadth. We do not interpret past history. We do not emancipate ourselves from history altogether, but we enter into the history that is determined by the promised and guaranteed eschaton..." (T/H p154).

Having as its subject Christ's future, Christian eschatology contrasts with Old Testament promissory faith. Contacts between the tradition of late Jewish apocalyptic and Christianity are in important respects broken. The Easter narratives reveal not the "course of history", but: "the future of the crucified Christ for the world" (T/H p193). Justification of sinners, the ground for the universal resurrection is established for all in this one man. Christ takes the place of the Torah, and his death, rather than obedience to the law, is central. So the hope of the Christian comes from the unique events of Easter; from what is revealed as the "inexhaustible future" of Christ, with its significance as "God's future for the world".

The Easter events are central to understanding the nature of the eschaton. It is through them that we share in the resurrection - through obedience whose dynamic source is hope. Whilst: "Christ is risen and beyond the reach of death... his followers are not yet beyond the reach of death..." For in the history made possible in the light of the eschaton "... it is only through their hope that they here attain to participation in the life of the resurrection" (T/H p160).

Moltmann describes a reciprocity between the events of the death and resurrection of Christ, and those which are to come: "... the Christ event is presented within the framework of an eschatological expectation... and the future expectation is grounded in the Christ event..." (T/H p162). Christ is here the ground and guarantee of "a still outstanding fulfilment" (T/H p163). His eschatological lordship is not in itself the "eternal presence of God" (ibid). This presence is considered:

"... the eschatological future goal of history, not its inmost essence. Creation is therefore not the things that are given and lie to hand, but the future of these things, the resurrection and the new being." (T/H p164)

With the emphasis on the quality of the new being, it is evident that the eschatological outlook proposed is one which will take the "trials", "contradictions", and the "godlessness" of the world as it lies to hand, with seriousness (ibid). The dimension of suffering and its relationship to the promise, is brought to one's attention with the statement: "The promise which announces the eschaton, and in which the eschaton announces itself, is the motive power, the mainspring, the driving force, and the torture of history" (T/H p165). As we shall see, the main reason that this is so, is because "Creation is... not the things that are given... but the future of these things." This raises the question of promise as motor of an unjustifiable dialectic; the possibility that it is consciously made the mainspring and torture of history, since God reserves the divine presence to bestow as the essence of a new world. If this is so, then divine responsibility for unjustifiable evil will threaten a deepening of the crisis of coherence for the idea of the God who is wholly good.

The section "The 'Death of God' and the Resurrection of Christ" (T/H p165ff), discusses the way in which this death and the resurrection, the basis of the Christian hope, can be approached. The Easter Kerygma binds together three key questions concerning "the fact, the witness and the eschatological hope" (T/H p166). They cannot be asked separately. Put in expanded form, they deal with; (A) the factuality of the resurrection (historicity/possibility); (B) what one is to do (ethical/existential); (C) for what one may hope (eschatological). I shall look at (A) and shortly after, (C), and as we shall later see, Moltmann's response to each generates significant problems.

(A) What one recognises as (qualifying as) reality, and will therefore shape one's view as to the reality of the resurrection, is something which the resurrection itself may very well call into question. Rather than approaching Easter with some single critical criterion, such as historical probability, or potential underlying meaning, one needs to ask a question that illuminates the situation out of which (all) contemporary questions on the resurrection arise. Thus, a "... question which embraces the whole modern experience of the world, of self, and of the future, a question which we ourselves constitute with our whole reality" (T/H p167). And: "... it is no accident when this situation is interpreted by expounding the statement of Hegel and Nietzsche: 'God is dead'" (ibid). 'God' of Christ's resurrection, understood as 'God' in the formulation "God is dead" (an idea under-pinning atheistic contemporary culture) brings the question of the resurrection new relevance. By this means one overcomes the optional way in which the resurrection proclamation is read (with 'God' as simply an object of history, human experience). Only if this is understood "is the proclamation of the resurrection, and only then are faith and hope in

the God of the promise, something that is necessary, that is new, that is possible in an objectively real sense" (T/H p168).

Moltmann refers to two "God is dead" statements. The German Romantic poet Jean Paul has Christ say to the dead awaiting the Last Judgement: "There is no God. I was mistaken. Everywhere is only stark staring nothing..." (My Abvtn. T/H p168, Moltmann quoting G Bornkamm, Studien zu Antike und Urchristentum p245f, 1959). For Jean Paul the necessary connection between resurrection and the existence of God was clear. The reference to Hegel is more substantial, with a quotation from Glauben und Wissen (1802, Ed. F Meiner, 1962, p123), illustrative of his giving "philosophical existence" to the speculative Good Friday. Here then, the feeling in modern culture that God is dead expresses, speculatively, in a universal form, thought, the reality of the Easter cross. It sees the "abyss which engulfs all being" and recognises, philosophically, the absolute suffering which is a necessary element, moment, of the highest idea. This godlessness is alone the grounds on which: " - the highest totality can and must rise again in all its seriousness and from its deepest foundation, as also all-embracingly, and in the most cheerful freedom of form." Atheistic consciousness is the universalising of the historic Good Friday; which becomes a speculative Good Friday of the "forsakenness of all that is" (T/H p169).

Moltmann holds that a theological perspective on Hegel will read one thing clearly in what is said. The "god-forsakenness of the world" is the theatre of God's future: resurrection cannot be the experience of Christ alone (T/H p170). The precise extent of intended appropriation or identification is as usual unclear, but Moltmann does wish to distance himself from Hegel's understanding of the abyss as a moment of the

"highest idea". The cross is not^{to} be viewed as part of "the divine process", and as such "immanent" in God (T/H p171). This would be to introduce the idea of the "self-movement of absolute Spirit", and, according to Moltmann, to think in terms of a "dialectical epiphany of the eternal as subject" (T/H p172), so undermining the historicity of Christ (see also critique of speculative theology in TKG p107). I shall refer to this issue of dialectic later.

His closing words in this section offer only a little light on how the issue of the death and resurrection of Christ is to be approached, now that Hegelianism has been publicly put to one side. The death of God can be the moment of the deification of man, or give "... the world that has established itself upon the corpse of God its proper setting in the historic process of the future of the truth. The world is then not engulfed in the abyss of nothing, but its negative aspects are taken up into the 'not yet' of hope" (T/H p172). It is not quite clear what the historic process of the future of truth is, particularly the extent to which great creaturely suffering is a necessary and inevitable component, or not at all.

The question of the 'not yet' is developed in the discussion of the historical approach to the Easter events. In a critical reference to E. Troeltsch (On History and Dogmatic Method 1898: p729ff - T/H p175ff), Moltmann argues that the need to establish essential similarity between events has vicious consequences for attempts to comprehend the new. Troeltsch "ontologically grounded" the method of analogy, as a "correlation which exists between all historical processes" (ibid). This is described as unacceptable. The cognitive potential of understanding should not be limited to noting recurring patterns, similarities, and

"comparative dissimilarity", but be able to comprehend and respond to the new - the "hitherto non-existent". For, it is said: "Only if the whole historical picture, contingency and continuity and all, could be shown to be in itself not necessary but contingent, should we come within sight of that which can be called the eschatologically new fact of the resurrection of Christ" (T/H p179).

That is, all suppositions are to be provisional; the resurrection is a "new possibility altogether" for the world and for existence (ibid). As *nova creatio* it is only intelligible when the full implication of the reality of things as *ex nihilo* in *contingentia mundi* is fully understood (ibid: this seems to be saying that all is disposable, that God can change reality or call up a new one which is much better. In the light of the difficulties which mount up on the question of evil, critics may begin to wonder why God didn't create a 'good' world at the start). Moltmann indicates that there is an "eschatological history" to which the world is subjected (T/H p180). Given that without the eschaton there can be no progress, the rejection of the resurrection as a "possible process of world history" (T/H p179-80), appears to further indicate that from the first there must have been a gloomy prognosis for the world if it were to deviate. Still, it is not clear if such an eschatological history is tinged with aspects of the 'self-movement' of spirit Moltmann so dislikes, translated into a drama of ontological re-structuring, although without Hegelian coherence *vis a vis* the real integrity of the world process. Moltmann argues that the resurrection makes history and will conflict with existing concepts of history (and surely of reality) which are "ultimately based on other 'history-making events, shocks, or revolutions" (T/H p181). This suggests future difficulties with a

positive doctrine of creation and the natural world (see particularly chapter eight of this study).

With the question "'For what may I hope?'" (C), historical and existential questions are earthed in the promissory significance of the resurrection. Moltmann here rejects the idea that he is placing events within a "teleology of universal history". Nevertheless something arguably similar seems to follow. The horizon of the Easter experience and judgement is that of eschatological expectation. The narratives of Easter stand within "the special horizon of prophetic and apocalyptic expectations, hopes and questions" founded round the promise (T/H p191). Easter itself sets up a horizon that is changed. Traditional promises are universalised; answers come from Easter "within the eschatological horizon of this event" (T/H p192).

The horizon of promise and mission, is where the "question of 'true human nature' arises", and where it receives its answer. The "new being" in Christ is the way through which "true human nature emerges" (T/H p196 - the aspect of 'not yet' becomes important again). In the new being in Christ, "the still hidden and unfulfilled future of human nature can be sought" (T/H p196). This openness of Christian existence is not some factor in the created human make-up, a modification of the *cor inquieta*. It derives from the historicising *promissio inquieta*: "The resurrection of Christ goes on being a *promissio inquieta* until it finds rest in the resurrection of the dead and a totality of new being... the contradiction that is always and everywhere perceptible in the unredeemed world, and the sorrow and suffering caused by that world, are taken up into the confidence of hope, while on the other hand hope's confidence becomes earthly and universal" (T/H p196).⁴ Or as it is put:

"Any kind of docetic hope which leaves earthly conditions or corporeal existence to the mercy of their own contradictoriness and restricts itself to the Church, to the cultus or to believing inwardness, is therefore a denial of the cross. The hope that is born of the cross and the resurrection transforms the negative, contradictory and torturing aspects of the world into terms of 'not yet', and does not suffer them to end in 'nothing'" (T/H p196-7).

The righteousness of God will provide the grounds for a new creation. (T/H p204-5) The "mystery of Jesus Christ" is the "realisation and revelation of a new divine righteousness" (T/H p205). This consists not only of the *remissio peccatorum*, but of the promised lordship of Christ. Where the power of God is at work, so there is the tension of expectation. The justified man stands in contradiction to this world, although, it appears, constructively: "He must in obedience seek the divine righteousness in his body, on earth, and in all creatures" (T/H p206). In the process of the imputation of righteousness to the unrighteous, God "attains his rights over against his creation". The struggle of the justified in the world is a prelude to God's lordship, and once more, to the attaining "to his rights over his world" (T/H p207).

Always of importance is the overcoming of death. In Moltmann sin and death are often linked. The overcoming of unrighteousness invariably includes "reconciliation and redemption of the mortal body". Referring to Rom. 6.10-11:

"The divine righteousness which is here revealed finds its measure not in the sin it forgives, but in that new life in the glory of the risen and exalted Christ which it promises and to which it points... Along with this goes the fact that since the gospel of divine righteousness has its ground in the dying and living of Jesus, sin and death are seen together. 'The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.' (Rom.6.23 cf. I Cor. 15.55ff) Sin is therefore to be understood as unrighteousness, as having no ground and no rights, as being unable to stand. This includes both being lost in revolt against God and in falsehood, and also dying and being swallowed up in nothingness. The divine righteousness which is revealed in the cross and resurrection of Jesus accordingly embraces both reconciliation with God and justification of life. It embraces forgiveness of guilt and

annihilation of the destiny of death. It embraces reconciliation and redemption of the mortal body..." (T/H p206)

(Sin and death are somehow linked, but the nature of the connection is not clear. Death is the 'wages' of sin. It is 'seen together' with sin. It is a 'destiny'. Nowhere is it seen as a biological necessity, given that God has created a realm of evolving, organic, variegated beings: see also TKG p50-1. God in Creation will be particularly interesting on this question. It remains to be noted that if the view that the body became mortal through sin is repudiated, problems still follow from the fact that it is seen to require redemption because death is absolutely undesirable and incompatible with God's coming rule. That God, who has created *ex nihilo* this world from out of all that is logically possible, who will create in a flash a realm of immortal beings, has chosen to create mortal beings whose mortality has no justification, is anathema, is problematic).

Moltmann offers a characterisation of the 'Jewish' attitude to death. The 'periphery' of Old Testament thought, and late apocalyptic offered some hope of resurrection, not on an anthropological or cosmological basis, but on theological grounds. Thus Ezekiel 37:11 (Then he said to me 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel. Behold, they say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off"',), leads on to Ezekiel 37:5 (Thus says the Lord God to these bones: Behold I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live), a promise which is without conditions. Late Jewish conceptions of *creatio ex nihilo* and *resurrectio mortuorum* "mark the eschatological extremities of the religion of promise". They announce the "victory of God over the absence of God" (T/H p210). This too, in its way, is the significance of the resurrection of Jesus; the raising of Jesus is the negation of the

negation of God, "(Hegel)", it overcomes the curse and damnation of the death which ended his life. Previous hope of resurrection thought in terms of "proclaiming the victory of praise and therewith of life over death and over the curse of godforsakenness," - the "victory of God over the absence of God" (ibid).

The resurrection of Jesus is "a conquest of the deadliness of death... a conquest of judgement and of the curse, as a beginning of the fulfilment of the promised life, and thus... a conquest of all that is dead in death" (T/H p211). The resurrection is the beginning of the "abolition of the Universal Good Friday, of that god-forsakenness of the world which comes to light in the deadliness of the death of the cross" (ibid). Again, the resurrection is fundamentally the conquest of the "death of God", and as such it breaks the "universal bond of death" (ibid). This antithesis between death as god-forsakenness and eternal life as righteousness is something which will require exploration. For Moltmann's look at the 'Future of Life' reveals that "... eternal life... is the consummation of all things" (T/H p212). We may wonder if there is a consummatory process involved, and if so, if there is no justification for the suffering, what possible defence of it there can be. But if there is no necessary (Irenaean style) process, and we have fallen previously from a state of consummate existence, and become mortal, what is there to prevent this happening in future? Yet our being will be new and stable. This begs the question of the instability of our past and present existence, given that it has led to great and terrible suffering. There seems to be no reason why God should have created us this way: in a fashion, and in a world that has brought evil for which there can be no talk of proportionate good. What can it mean to say that God is wholly good and perfectly loving? Questions for later.

There is here then, an agenda for the future. The future is to be the overcoming of a now apparent paradox. That paradox is the 'hidden' nature of those qualities of existence which are yet the consummation of things. It is a hiddenness, revealed in the Christ event, and from then on passing away. There is "dissension" (*Entzweiung*) between the self and the body (T/H p213) and "expectation of the creature" for the new creation, the unfolding of those things latent in Christ; eternal life and God's justice. Christian eschatology is (again) an eschatology of all things, and, potentially damaging when one considers unjustifiable evil in terms of divine negligence, it is held:

"If the kingdom of God begins as it were with a new act of creation, then the Reconciler is ultimately the Creator, and thus the eschatological prospect of reconciliation must mean the reconciliation of the whole creation, and must develop an eschatology of all things. In the cross we can recognise the god-forsakenness of all things, and with the cross we can recognize the real absence of the kingdom of God in which all things attain to righteousness, life and peace." (T/H p223)

Moltmann hints at some element of stewardship of creation for man: "... he [the man of hope] is compelled to accept the world in all meekness subject as it is to death and the powers of annihilation, and to guide all things towards their new being" (T/H p224). This new being will mark an end of the "negative present" (T/H p215), as correlative of the "'new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness' (II Peter 3.13)..." (T/H p215). There, "'God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.' (Rev.21.4)..." (ibid). Till then, "As long as 'every thing' is not 'very good', the difference between hope and reality remains" (ibid).

Of Moltmann's review of the theology developed in this lengthy section, certain areas stand out. He is, as earlier, opposed to a view of human

development related to a dialectic of world history (T/H p226). Resurrection as *creatio ex nihilo* has a clear message; the real dialectic is of an apocalyptic kind. There comes the promise, and with it a decisive factor; progress comes not through a linear betterment of the present but by its radical contradiction. This is in line with what Moltmann understands as the introduction of a truly historic possibility of existence with the promise. But, and perhaps in some tension with what Moltmann has said above, and indeed, with what soon follows, he wishes to qualify this coming of the new, arguing that it is not "totally separate from the reality which we can now experience" (T/H p227). It is, however, a future which is "really outstanding" (*ausstehende*).

When one thinks of the presumed consistency of God's righteousness, Moltmann's attempts to clarify the nature of the *novum* (ibid) through its relation to the Christ event, and the future of Christ, are somewhat puzzling. The danger is that God is seen as promising to be righteous, when present circumstances might dictate that such a promise be queried as the promise of a righteous creator.⁵ The basic points for conceiving revelation are the poles of promise and fulfilment. Revelation is not an unveiling of what is, but a dynamic of fulfilment. The Christ-event does not ultimately fulfil what it promises in the sense that the final revelation is the "sequel", being an unveiling of what already is. The "universal fulfilment" of Christ's actions is not the dissolution of this world in the face of a Platonic realm, as Moltmann calls it, but a new world.

"The Christian expectation is directed to no other than the Christ who has come, but it expects something new from him, something that has not yet happened so far: it awaits the fulfilment of the promised righteousness of God in all things, the fulfilment of the resurrection of the dead that is promised in his resurrection, the fulfilment of the Lordship of the crucified one over all things that is promised in his exaltation." (T/H p229)

Thus there is creation's looked-for experience of the Lordship of Christ, to be fulfilled in the *nova creatio*. Till then we are in mission, as the future draws closer. The section "The Humanising of Man in the Missionary Hope" (T/H p285ff) is particularly interesting. Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah: three examples of how recognition of the human situation becomes clear only in the context of call to mission. It is a recognition of inadequacy. We cannot know what we have been, and what we really are. God's promise that he will be with us is the only possible grounds for our coming to an understanding of our nature, and the sole basis of a "new ability to be". We are not an "'established being'" (T/H p286). We are hidden from ourselves, as *homo absconditus* (ibid). So "... man attains to knowledge of himself by discovering the discrepancy between the divine mission and his own being, by learning what he is, yet of himself cannot be" (T/H p285). It is knowledge of "... the impossibility of one's own existence in face of the possibilities demanded by the divine mission" (ibid). Thus mission and call involve not the mere possibility of uncovering, review, and understanding of human being, but a summons to new possibilities. The Old Testament call was directed particularly to individual persons and communities, whilst we experience with the gospel a universal eschatology:

"The comparison with nature and with the animals, or the comparison with other men in the present and in history, does not yet bring out what man's nature is, but only the comparison with the future possibilities which are disclosed to him from the direction of his life, from his *intentio vitalis*." (T/H p286)

Again, human beings are ex-sistent, rather than sub-sistent (T/H p287); their nature intelligible only from the perspectives of orientation towards the future and certainly not through any illusory conception of a *substantia hominis*.

Moltmann later talks of human expectation in the pain of contingent flawed existence, past and present (T/H p291). This phenomenon, it is held, leads to possibilities of the analogical understanding of a dimension of human existence across time: seemingly constituted by the fact that human beings are in a *statu nascendi*: "Hoping in the promised new creation by God, man here stands *in statu nascendi*, in the process of his being brought into being by the calling, coaxing, compelling word of God" (T/H p287). Moltmann argues, perhaps problematically from a theodicy perspective (and especially in the light of his later explicit discussions of theodicy), that the scriptural witness on the history of humanity does not discuss history in terms of human existential possibilities, but concentrates on the new possibilities which shape the future. The world is mutable, essentially an "open process" (T/H p289). There are too (as previously noted), "boundless [*riesiger*] possibilities for good and for evil" (T/H p 289).

In a passage which seems to contradict notions of a history to which the world is subjected, mission "regards the world as an open process in which the salvation and destruction, the righteousness and annihilation of the world are at stake" (ibid). Further, perhaps paradoxical in part, if the righteousness of the world is truly at stake in the reality of this world, mission "does not ask about the hidden wholeness by which this world, as it is, is intrinsically held together, but about the future *totum* in which everything that is here in flux and threatened by annihilation will be complete and whole". And, the "... totality of the world is not here seen as a self-dependent cosmos of nature, but as the goal of a world history which can be understood only in dynamic terms" (T/H p289). We might say that if the dynamic is centred on present energies and possibilities within the world, it would seem helpful that

they are given due respect - not something which would necessarily involve idolisation of a self-sufficient, un-God-related static cosmos. Of course, Moltmann may be saying that their tendency is to be future orientated upon a new but contiguous reality. Still, the theology of nature is dangerously weak: "The call and mission of the 'God of hope' suffer man no longer to live amid surrounding nature, and no longer in the world as his home, but compel him to exist within the horizon of history" (ibid). Nevertheless: "This horizon... requires of him responsibility and decision for the world of history" (ibid). The two demands, however, appear incompatible.⁶

Man, he continues, should not resort to the idea of the human subject's ability to make history at its whim (ibid). For properly "his thinking adjusts things to the coming messianic reconciliation" (T/H p290): "He does not link things, as in technical positivism, with his own subjectivity. Rather, he adjusts (*vermittelt*) being to the universal, rectifying future of God". Still, Moltmann insists that this reconciliation has its foundations "laid" by the world-transforming obedience of those called by the promise, an obedience grounded as follows: "... the world can be changed by the God of his hope, and to that extent also by the obedience to which this hope moves him" (T/H p290).

The obedience "that comes of hope and mission forms the bridge between that which is promised and hoped for and the real [*realen*] possibilities of the reality of the world" (T/H p289). Certainly this appears to suggest a major role for transformative obedience, although the nature of the "real possibilities" of the world, and the power of obedience, as opposed to, or in comparison with God's transformatory actions,

remains ambiguous. On p288 of Theology of Hope, the information that creating 'objective possibilities' of a meaningful nature covers such crucial areas as creation of a new cosmos out of nothing, and the abolition of death, tends to relativize the ideals of missionary practice even when portrayed as 'world-transforming': "The theory of world-transforming, future-seeking missionary practice does not search for eternal orders... but for possibilities that exist in the world in the direction of the promised future". This seems more modest. Rightly so when the "... call to obedient moulding of the world would have no object if this world were immutable. The God who calls and promises would not be God, if he were not the God and Lord of that reality into which his mission leads, and if he could not create (*Sendung*) real, objective possibilities for his mission."

Indeed as the Lord of its possibilities, God can change the world. For the human being, once more, "World reality [therefore] does not become... as in the modern age, the material for the exercise of duty or technique" (ibid). Rather, "understanding consists in the fact that in sympathy with the misery of being he [i.e. we] anticipates the redeeming future of being and so lays the foundation of its reconciliation, justification and stability" (T/H p290). As we shall see, in The Crucified God, and Religion, Revolution and the Future, human liberation and justice for all is meaningless without new creation, and on its own merely amounts to "renovation of the prison" (see RRF p105).

Moltmann comes to a terse estimation of understanding history in regard to theodicy issues:

"The glory and misery of past ages do not require to contain the justification of God or of reason." (T/H p291)

Even if: "The world... appears as a correlate of hope. Hope alone really takes into account the 'earnest expectation of the creature' for its freedom and truth" (T/H p289). Freedom and truth may well impell people to explore critically what it would be for God for the misery of past ages to be unjustifiable.

The retro-active aspect to the promised freedom from annihilation reaches back to an alien and alienated past, and redeems it by supercession of the tyranny of the negative, through ontological restructuring: "'Perspectives must be created in which the world looks changed and alien and reveals its cracks and flaws in much the same way as it will one day lie destitute and disfigured in the Messiah's light...'" (my abbvtn, Moltmann quoting from T. W. Adorno Minima Moralia 1962, p333ff). It is in this sense that there is a solidarity between past and present, a "certain contemporaneousness both in the historic alienation and in the eschatological hope (T/H p291). More importantly: "Only this solidarity in the earnest expectation which groans under the tyranny of the negative and hopes for liberating truth, takes historic account of history and performs among the dead shades of history the service of reconciliation" (T/H p291). We are with the language of new being. Luther is cited:

"... a strange language and a new grammar... For his will is, because we are to be new men, that we should also have other and new thoughts, minds and understandings and not regard anything in the light of reason, as it is for the world, but as it is before his eyes, and take our cue from the future, invisible, new nature for which we have hope and which is to come after this wretched and miserable nature..." (Moltmann quoting WA 34, II, pp.480f., T/H p290)

Hence Christianity's message, if it is not already clear, is one of transformation. Evidently, non-conformity with the world, in conformity with God, involves not some purely inward process of obedience, but a change to the face of society, in the context of a expectation of more

fundamental change (or more problematically, as we shall see especially in Religion, Revolution and the Future, only effectively in the new creation itself). New kinds of human relationship to others, and to things is essential. In fact Christian hope is "... in search of 'other institutions', because it must expect true, eternal life, the true and eternal dignity of man..." (T/H p330).

Moltmann cites Hegel: "A thing is only alive when it contains contradiction in itself and is indeed the power of holding the contradiction within itself and enduring it [G.W.F. Hegel, Werke IV, p.67]" (T/H p337). This adds to the intermittently Hegelian tone of his theology the idea of one's only being alive when possessing interior contradictions, and the strength to hold and "endure" these. It appears that God has lived through great contradictions, successfully endured them. It is still doubtful though, if God can be wholly good in an intelligible way, and his world not be required to be one of good proportionate to evil; worthwhile, ultimately justifiable suffering.

In Moltmann's understanding of the contradiction between God's righteousness and this world (whichever way this relates to the Hegelian tradition), risk is apparently central. Still, it is the horizon which exists in the light of the resurrection which makes such spending of self meaningful. Indeed: "If... we are thus to risk expending ourselves, then we need a horizon of expectation which makes the expending meaningful... Faith can expend itself in the pain of love... because it is upheld by the assurance of the hope in the resurrection of the dead" (T/H p337-8).

So this possibility of self-expenditure becomes a human reality "within that horizon of expectation which transcends this world" (ibid). Thus:

"For love, we always require hope and assurance of the future, for love looks to as yet unrealized possibilities of the other, and thus grants him freedom and allows him a future in recognition of his possibilities.../ this present world... becomes open for loving, ministering, self-expenditure in the interests of the humanizing of conditions... It is therefore the world of possibilities, the world in which we serve the future, promised truth and righteousness and peace. This is an age of diaspora, of sowing in hope, of self-surrender and sacrifice... Thus self-expenditure in this world, day-to-day love in hope, becomes possible and becomes human within that horizon of expectation which transcends this world." (ibid)

This raises questions on the historically limited opportunities for genuine love and self-giving implicit in the relatively recent arrival of the Christian message: a matter which I shall look at soon. If in the long run, Moltmann seems to say that causal connections between freedom, courage, love, and suffering are not enough to justify the latter's possibility, then the world becomes something arguably impossible to describe as worthwhile. If this vitiation of a theology of the world is the case, huge sweeps of history (if not all), marked by catastrophic suffering, and without the horizon of the new creation, become arguably absurd and meaningless delays to an eschatological in-breaking of righteousness. At this point, having reached the end of Theology of Hope, I want to go back to look at the opening sections of Theology of Hope, and very briefly look at Moltmann's attitudes to Kant and Bultmann.

Moltmann refers critically to the Kantian ethical reduction; eschatology as realisation of the self, according to precepts of moral and practical reason. In another direction several statements of Kant's are picked out. Such as: "'The abiding and unchanging 'I' (of pure apperception) forms the correlate of all our representations'" (Critique of Pure Reason: ET N. Kemp Smith 1929, p146, T/H p47) - "'Thus the time in which all change of appearances has to be thought, remains and does not change'" (op.cit., p213: T/H p47). And: "'Time is nothing but the form of inner sense, that is, of the intuition of ourselves and of our inner state'" (op.cit.,

p77: T/H p47). Moltmann argues: "The conditions of possible experience which were understood by Kant in a transcendental sense must be understood instead as historically flowing conditions. It is not that time at a standstill is the category of history, but the history which is experienced from the eschatological future of the truth is the category of time" (ibid).⁷

This appears to be the Copernican revolution in reverse, with the suggestion of passive non-subjectivity, humanity as cognitively totally at one with whatever new reality or altered dimension God wishes to create about his creatures: a kind of absolute realism hingeing on complete identity of subject and object, so that distanciation, or perhaps better, subjectivity, dissolves. If though, God's eschatological history is to determine the category of time, Moltmann appears to be confusing content, what is to happen, and all that implies in its own right for our future as human beings, and our understanding of the world, with the question of the conditions of perception which are arguably inalienable to us as human beings. If it is apparently not possible for God's rule to exist for beings with the created perceptual integrity first 'given' them, then it seems unfair to make them such as their wrong actions are punished by mortality till the true conditions for righteousness are introduced. I am not asserting that human perception cannot to some extent be learnt: but Moltmann seems to suggest that possible conditions of experience as conditions for enabling us to live in the truth, are determined and re-determined by God in relation to a point beyond our present and past experiential, perceptual possibilities. This leads strongly to the conclusion that the historically flowing conditions of past human experience have been conditions of god-forsakenness. The reference to the category of time may seem unimportant

in dealing with the question of evil. However, by implication, if all conditions of possible experience are so conditioned by God-driven history, the divine responsibility for any lack of integrity in past experiential conditions cannot avoid being highlighted. God can change the conditions of possible human perception and experience without compromising our humanity. What then can be the justification for permitting and creating a world where unjustifiable suffering would be favoured by the conditions of possible experience?

Perhaps most significant from the point of view of the theodicy question, Moltmann concludes, that with a fully eschatological understanding of revelation, *Deus dixit* reveals a promise which "would be a new perception of history's openness towards the future. Not all ages would have an equally immediate relation to God and an equal value in the light of eternity, but they would be perceived to be in a process determined by the promised *eschaton*" (T/H p58). The question of what it is to be ontologically different not only in terms of mortality and freedom, but in those of fundamental possibilities of perception, appears part of this issue of inequality, and can hardly be without a bearing on how the problem of evil and human/divine responsibility is to be viewed in Moltmann's theology.

Moltmann is also concerned with Bultmann: with his "correlation of God and self" (T/H p61). According to Bultmann, the *eschaton* is the present possibility of liberation of human existence from the threat of objectification (T/H p62). Moltmann rejects this as a de-natured eschatology. He sees it as a symptom of the setting up of an antithesis between the inward subjectivity of the self, and the world which is consigned to the realm of objects and from which all subjective

relationships are abstracted. That is, the dichotomy of understanding oneself either from the world or from God. This antithesis has to be overcome. He argues that Bultmann's theology of the event of proclamation and the understanding of revelation which it embodies, the coming to an original and final authenticity, lacks a coherent understanding of *promissio*. The problem it is said to have with the world contrasts with the expectation of an eschatology of 'not yet': "in which faith stretches out towards the future... [in which] it becomes possible to perceive a world that is not identical with 'world' in the antithetical sense in which the doctrine of justification uses the term to denote the epitome of corruption, law and death..." (T/H p69). In eschatological faith "The world itself is subjected... to vanity, in hope" (ibid). Indeed:

"Talk of the openness of man is bereft of its ground, if the world itself is not open at all, but is a closed shell. Without a cosmic eschatology there can be no assertion of an eschatological existence of man. Christian eschatology cannot reconcile itself with Kantian concepts of science and reality. (ibid)

This perspective, with its hope of the redemption of the corporeal enters into a solidarity with creatures (ibid). For: " 'future' is that reality which fulfils and satisfies the promise because it completely corresponds to it...": as only "... that event which is spoken of as 'new creation out of nothing', as 'resurrection of the dead', as 'kingdom' and 'righteousness of God'..." can do (T/H p85). For with hope we are in harmony with ourselves "*in spe*", but in disharmony "*in re*". The hoping person is seen as a "riddle" to themselves. They are an "open question addressed to the future of God" (T/H p91).

We have now reached one of those tantalizing points where the issue of problematic deficiency or incompleteness seems about to be resolved by Moltmann's approval of a Hegelian approach. Thus the promise opens us up to the "dreadful power of the negative" as something positive, and in

fact, the hallmark of the life of the spirit - several major extracts from the Phenomenology of Mind affirming this:

"If revelation encounters him as promise, then it does not identify him by disregarding what is negative, but opens him to pain, patience and the 'dreadful power of the negative', as Hegel has said. It makes him ready to take the pain of love and of self-emptying upon himself in the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead and who quickens the dead. 'Yet it is not the life which abhors death and keeps itself pure of corruption, but the life which endures it and maintains itself in the midst of it, that is the life of the spirit.' 'The power of the spirit is only so great as its outgoing, its depth only so deep as the extent to which in its expending it ventures to spread itself and lose itself.' Thus the promised identity of man leads into the differentiation of self-emptying. He gains himself by abandoning himself. He finds life by taking death upon him. He attains to freedom by accepting the form of a servant. That is how the truth that points to the resurrection of the dead comes to him." (T/H p92 - Hegel quotations from Baillie translation, op.cit., pp93 and 74)

So we gain ourselves by abandoning ourselves. Yet as we already know, Moltmann is not prepared to accept that this occurs within a divine process other than that of the defeat of death as the prelude to the coming of righteousness. That is, there is no apparent explanatory/justificatory process involved, even though in certain places, as above, it is hard not to feel that a classical dialectic is at work. Overall, taking the hostility to Hegelianism with seriousness, all we know so far is that the world is bad, rather than very good: that it contradicts God's righteousness: that God created it: that he will create a new world: that self-giving love is good; and that Hegelian dialectic is unacceptable self-movement of Spirit.

Ernst Bloch is quoted: "To hope there belongs the knowledge that in the outside world life is as unfinished as in the Ego that works in that outside world." (T/H p92: Das Prinzip Hoffnung 1, 1959, p285. ET, The Principle of Hope, p246ff Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986) So hope requires a world in historic flux (T/H p92), runs Moltmann's argument, which continues by implying that the world is by itself a closed system of

cause and effect, necessitating for the sake of the promise, for hope, that God open it up to his possibilities.²⁸ One is almost bound to ask why this great and painful drama is being played. Apart from telling us how the world is being 'fixed' there is little on this key subject. Thus:

"... hope has a chance of a meaningful existence only when reality itself is in a state of historic flux and when historic reality has room for open possibilities ahead. Christian hope is meaningful only when the world can be changed by him in whom this hope hopes, and is thus open to that for which this hope hopes; when it is open to all kinds of possibilities (possible for God) and open to the resurrection of the dead. If the world were a self-contained system of cause and effect, then hope could either regard this world as itself the fulfilment, or else in gnostic fashion transcend and reflect itself into the supra-worldly realm." (ibid)

Creation, if such situations are to be avoided, requires possibilities of a nature inconceivable within the world system, possibilities possible for God (T/H p92). Clearly the world as it is cannot bring fulfilment; nor is the continued existence of a flawed world tolerable when hope in righteousness requires the existence of one which is actually just, and corresponds to God.

Moltmann concludes this section with a challenge to 'non-historical' existence; a "cosmologico-mechanistic" way of experiencing reality; reason's seeking to abolish chance, creating a world of institutionalised relationships; a fear of the end of history. Whilst:

"The experience of the world as history can hardly take the form of again considering the experience of history either in terms of fate, in that passivity in which we suffer birth and death, or in terms of chance... [the] scientific and technical efforts of the modern age have... been aimed at bringing about the end of this kind of history, the end of the history of chance, of contingency, of surprise, crisis and catastrophe." (T/H p93)

As Moltmann has just argued, the world requires possibilities for joy of a nature not conceivable within its systems, and it is thus not surprising that society should seek to control catastrophic forces, and often resent

those of what is described as fate. Why there are such forces is though far from clear.

He makes a distinction between scientific millenarianism, and the eschatological history which rises from the event of the resurrection: "the 'end of history' in the 'modern age' can no more be promised and expected than the modern age (*Neuzeit*) can be the 'new age' (*neu Zeit*) in the apocalyptic sense - as this expression (*Neuzeit*) was surely meant to be" (T/H p94). So: "Christian theology has one way in which it can prove its truth by reference to the reality of man and the reality of the world that concerns man - namely by accepting the questionableness of human existence and the questionableness of reality as a whole and taking them up into that eschatological questionableness of human nature and the world which is disclosed by the event of promise." For:

"'Threatened by death' and subjected to vanity' - that is the expression of our universal experience of existence and the world."
(ibid)

Questions taken up as the sentence goes, "In hope" by a theology which "directs them to the promised future of God" (T/H p94). I will look at what Religion Revolution and the Future, and Hope and Planning add to this after discussing how Theology of Hope relates to the theodicy problem.

The first question I wish to ask, concerns the nature of God's love. On page thirty-one of Theology of Hope, Moltmann tells us that "love does not snatch us from the pain of time, but takes the pain of the temporal on itself". The temporal in this sense embraces the realm of suffering and transience in the present creation. Is there some reason or necessity for creating a reality which encompasses such evil? On page thirty-two there appears to be some kind of justification for the creation of a deficient world (I believe I am right in saying that a reading of Theology of Hope leads to the conclusion that it is condemnatory of the present conditions of existence, and characterises them as deficient). It is stated:

"Only in the perspective of this God [of the promise] can there possibly be a love that is more than *philia*, love to the existent and the like - namely *agape*, love to the non-existent, love to the unlike... to the lost, the transient, the dead; a love that can take upon it the annihilating effect of pain and renunciation because it receives its power from the hope of a *creatio ex nihilo*."

In this context *agape* appears most highly valued. God promises a new creation because this creation is so deeply flawed. In so promising, God recognises the existence of the dying and the lost. In pointing to the new cosmos where there shall be no such suffering, he expresses special love: that which expresses itself in loving the unlike, the downtrodden; which derives its power from the ability to indicate the certainty, with *creatio ex nihilo*, that such suffering shall come to an end, that it has no place in God's kingdom of righteousness. However, the condition of there being *agape* is immense suffering, insofar as it is to be love, not simply of the finite, but the lost, the transient, and the dead.

A small example. If the suffering involved in the natural famines in India and China for which estimates of fatalities are available, 28,800,000 deaths between 1769 and 1901, is taken as a modest and

(outside these areas) almost forgotten part of the *agape* scenario, then difficulties conventionally arise: especially if *agape* and ideas of responsibility and care are the principal justifications. So I think most theodacists would recognise. How does one do theology after Doji Bara (the 'skull famine' 1790-2), and Orissa (1866): in a world which God creates *ex nihilo*, and for which he/she, is in some real sense, responsible? One theodicy position is that God wants free creatures to evolve, to suffer, and grow, in love; to take responsibility themselves. But apart from making things difficult by repudiating the need for justification of the way the world is and has been, where the horror of natural famine might be redeemed by any pedagogical value: its opportunities for famine relief, if possible, and expressions of sympathy, or its inevitability in a wonderful but necessarily harsh self-regulating world, Moltmann subtly undermines, in another direction, the way in which this creation is something we could lovingly and constructively take responsibility for:

"Expectation makes life good, for in expectation man can accept his whole present, and find joy not only in its joy, but also in its sorrow, happiness not only in its happiness, but also in its pain."

This involves an arguably questionable concept of happiness and joy, one which might explain how God as creator *ex nihilo* of this world could look forward to the time when its suffering, even if unjustifiable and obscene, could be embraced in joy (for what joy in a creation where this was not the case? And yet, the most damaging suffering almost by definition falls outside such a positive vision). In order for this criticism to stick, and acknowledging that Moltmann doesn't here say that God wants to bring joy out of suffering, the following has to be considered: that the expectation which allows us to find joy in present suffering has its roots in the deficiencies which make the expectation possible: moreover, deficiencies which many do argue are incompatible

with the creative endeavours to be expected of a wholly good God. One can find relief in the thought that what is tormented will be liberated. Yet it is hard to accept that one could permit that someone or something be perhaps unjustifiably tormented in order that they might experience escape from suffering and annihilation and the coming to the wholeness which is their true ontological state; something which they could not anyway obtain without one's intervention. This is damaging when it appears, as we shall see, that almost the only joy in Moltmann's model of life is that which stems from the hoped for supercession of this world. Certainly, it seems the only intelligible account of why the Moltmannian creation is so fundamentally warped is that some kind of history of hope involving suffering love and happiness in pain and hope is essential to God's initiative. If this option is foregone, then we really are dealing with a problematic creation: one perhaps impossible to reconcile with the existence of a wholly good God - where 'wholly good' could be rendered meaningfully, in something related to basic useage and conditions of entailment.

For Moltmann, this is a tormented world. Take the world suffering without hope, that is, in great ages preceding the distinct promise of God (although, according to Moltmann only the promise really set up a genuine sense of suffering. Let us say then, all the ages in which there has been despair). Moltmann says:

"... it can be said that living without hope is like no longer living. Hell is hopelessness, and it is not for nothing that at the entrance to Dante's hell there stand the words: 'Abandon hope, all ye who enter here.'" (T/H p32)

Perhaps superscription could be placed over the first creation, as described by Moltmann, and, realistically, upon the lives of many of God's creatures who have existed in that creation without the Christian

hope in the new creation. That is, according to Moltmann's own statements, insofar as they might hope to find fulfillment in their lives and in this world, and falsely so: or as they felt that the world was a theatre of absurd and unjustifiable suffering, and deduced from this to their own satisfaction, the un-likelihood of its being created by a wholly good God; or of there being any God at all.

So, *agape* is love which can say, 'you are suffering', but this suffering will be ended in the new creation. In other words:

"The hope that is staked on the creator *ex nihilo* becomes the happiness of the present when it loyally embraces all things in love, abandoning nothing to annihilation but bringing to light how open all things are to the possibilities in which they can live and shall live" (ibid).

For the notion of theodicy and of its problems to work, we must accept that even if God was not 'all in all' when he first created, he was still wholly good, as he has always been. If God was not wholly good; even a mixture in which good tended to predominate, and which is somehow moving towards a perfect goodness, then it would still be unreasonable to ask that all evil be justifiable. It might be, but there is no necessity that it need be so - even if God would on the whole like this to be the case. Besides, here one would simply not be talking of the God of Christianity. If *agape* takes its power from pointing to the future where suffering is no more, but this suffering does not need to be justified by the existence of *agape* itself (or anything else), then the idea that *agape*, and the creation in which it operates, is a manifestation of a divine love which is wholly good, is a contentious one. It is clear that in the new creation, *agape* of the kind which involves love of the 'non-existent', transient, dead, and dying, is not possible. This is because the new creation expresses God's righteousness. But the implications of present god-forsakenness do not seem to trouble Moltmann. One could agree

with Moltmann's apparent assumption that *philia*, or love of like for like cannot possibly exist between God and finite creatures as a kind of self-reflection and indirect self-worship. Still, it can be asked if the making of a whole, joyful finite realm, where, in being whole, there is a real difference and similarity - but something which for an obscure reason requires a prior ontic state to exist; one whose consequences are held not necessarily morally justifiable, and whose distinctive feature, in terms of love, is the *agape* predicated on terrible suffering and empowered by the good future, is a plausible proposition? *Agape* is aimed at the elimination of that which is its cause, at deep contradiction. Yet this is part of a painful process seen as without need to satisfy a moral rationale. Moreover, the whole ground and hope of redemption rests upon God's perfect righteousness and upon the power of creation *ex nihilo*, both of which God freely exercised in bringing this first creation into being. If God is perfectly free and wholly loving, how can this relate intelligibly to the state of the world and creation?

In the theology of a future cosmos of righteousness, what is possible "arises entirely from God's word of promise" (T/H p85). What is possible in the promise is not possible within this cosmos. What is embodied in the promise "goes beyond what is possible and impossible in the realistic sense. It does not illuminate a future which is somehow already inherent in reality" (ibid). And "'future' is that reality which fulfills and satisfies the promise because it completely corresponds to it, and accords with it". What is promised is, one understands, what is involved in God's being righteous. Thus, it is "... only in that event which is spoken of as 'new creation out of nothing,' as 'resurrection of the dead... that the promise... finds a reality which accords with it..." Yet again there are difficulties. Why understand God to be righteous when

one knows that things to be created are correlative with righteousness, and others that have been created, are not? By comparison, let us look at a story of 'human affairs.'

A motorway is to be built. A responsible task, involving deep consideration by the designer, or design team, of the value of life and what can be done to safeguard it. The designer of the motorway is simply the best. So, at least, the public have been told. However, the road proves to have many flaws. This is suprising, as the designer really did have total control over materials and construction, and a supposed mastery of dynamics, stress theory, and so on. It is suprising because the designer's agent has without hesitation described him as completely competent, not just as 'almost totally so'.

There are no other motorways to make comparison by. Even so, there are expectations which stem from the concept of competence, of being 'completely' so, and from the declarations of the all caring designer. Standing on a bridge overlooking the road, the designer is confronted by mayhem and tragedy. Much innocent and irreperable suffering is occurring, the consequence of major design failures and omissions. People are eventually promised that a new motorway is under construction, and will open some time in the future. Until then, the emergency services and drivers can take encouragement from this promise, and from the fact that although many victims suffered horribly, and are dead, they can be resuscitated to share in this new and altogether happier experience. It will come true: the designer is all caring and wholly competent, and the decisive manner in which the promise is announced, and the sweeping nature of the improvements, only go to strengthen this impression.

Asked about present inadequacies, clearly admitted in the radically re-designed new motorway, the designer is not so much apologetic, as after all, rather up-beat. Perhaps, it is suggested, although he is genuinely torn by the suffering of people, he is really trying to teach them the values of road-comradeship, or avoidance of dangers on a badly designed and hazardous motorway. But why? Such lessons have no applicability on the new motorway. And if the deficient motorway was constructed to demonstrate how the designer who was wholly competent would not rest until he had made a road which demonstrated this fact, then one would suggest a moral failure, or indeed, incompetence. Perhaps this is so. The designer has after all specified that only inadequate drivers can use the road, whereas all driver skill on the new road, and conditions in general, will be such that serious accidents cannot happen. This is something not possible in the present situation, as there are fixed boundaries, indeed vicious parameters, to human wholeness.

Certain apologists for the designer do not condone any justificatory moves. Whilst these moves recognise the designer's responsibility for so many crucial features of the road, they do not take on board the full implications of what it is to be all-caring and wholly competent. For trying to reconcile these qualities with what has happened is impossible and even blasphemous. Nevertheless, the fact that the designer's son has suffered as a result of a tragic incident does little to improve confidence amongst critics. Perhaps the designer is sincere. But are they competent? Do they mis-represent themselves?

This kind of analogy points, I believe, to real difficulties in a position where no justification is held to be necessary for the suffering of the present world. In Theology of Hope the decision to include a

discussion of theodicy should not have been something entirely optional, as it apparently was. Arguably far from it. Moltmann abstains from saying more than that the misery of the world requires no justification, and as if to support this, the theology itself is devoid of a rationale for suffering. Where, as in Moltmann, the theodicy problem is at least set up from within belief in God's righteousness, and is highlighted by misery endemic to this creation, this state of affairs cannot be passed by without question.

For instance, in this world, according to Moltmann, we are not free or truly ourselves. Death and dying is our destiny, all to be changed. Theology in these terms is evident in what Moltmann says on page ninety:

"... 'natural theology' - theology of existence and of history - is a halo, a reflection of the future light of God upon the inadequate material of present reality, a foretaste and advance intimation of the promised universal glory of God, who will prove himself to all and in all to be the lord..."

And of the theology of promise:

"... it does not have the appeal that its statements are 'self-evident', but it is essentially polemical... We shall have to turn the proofs of God the other way about and not demonstrate God from the world, but the world from God, not God from existence, but existence from God..."

So God's creatures have to struggle to proclaim what it is to exist from God with reference to a future period, and use this polemically against what already exists. This is disquieting. So too, is Moltmann's thinking on God's inexhaustibility.

On page one hundred and six it is said that: "The 'not-yet' of expectation surpasses every fulfilment that is already taking place now". There is a problem here. If what existed was very good, but what was possible and approaching was even better, then one could rejoice. Rejoice in the fact that "... the reason for the overplus of promise and for the

fact that it constantly overflows history lies in the inexhaustibility of the God of promise, who never exhausts himself in any historic reality but comes to rest only in a reality that corresponds to him" (T/H p106). But if much of what exists is at best amoral, and even very bad, and of so much evil there can be no justification, then the following range of alternatives can be plotted. [A] God is overflowing, abundant, and wholly good. He creates what is expressive of and thus compatible with himself. In his inexhaustible goodness he therefore creates a cosmos of eternal life, of truly free and human creatures; for whom there is no such menace as vicious transience, nor has there ever been. [B] God is overflowing, abundant; or perhaps he is something less than all in all, still though, perfectly good. He creates a world of suffering and transient creatures, but promises to create a new world radically different.

[A] is unproblematic, unless one is a Hegelian; or perhaps a Christian too. A number of consequences arise from [B]. Excluding the severe problem of unjustifiable evil, it seems there has to be some necessity for creating a world of transience. It hardly seems likely that God's coming to be all in all and/or creator of the new creation is unrelated to what he is enacting and letting be in creation. If this were the case God could simply have waited until he felt able to create a world without sorrows and death. It would seem that, given the contradictory nature of creation, there has had to be some necessity in God's creating the first creation as it is, even if we do not wish to say that there was a necessity to create. I suggest another analogy.

A designer builds a truck. It carries a large number of passengers across difficult terrain (we can leave aside the question of whether or not the designer has also manipulated the terrain for experimental purposes). The

truck is deficient in several important respects, and there are many problems for the passengers. Meanwhile, the designer flies on ahead. At the end of the course he unveils a wonderful new truck, its powerful lights pointing down the course, and inspiring the exhausted and suffering passengers (the designer's son goes part of the way, is injured, and then flown to the end). Or is that the promise that a new truck is waiting sufficient? On arriving, the passengers say they couldn't have completed the journey unless the lights had been shining so.

Had the designer been learning from the experience of the first vehicle in constructing the second? No, it turns out. He had the resources and the know-how to create the new vehicle from the beginning. Still, he has suffered agonies watching its predecessors perilous journey. Why then were the passengers given a dangerous vehicle: one which wasn't even to play the role of essential proto-type or 'proving-ground'? Perhaps the passengers were to learn and develop responsibilities. 'No', says the designer. 'I would never inflict such hardship, when as you can see, I am totally good, and that kind of experience would stand in contradiction to my wishes - and the new vehicle is a world apart in specification. On arrival the crew will^{be} allowed to rest so that they feel new people, and can face an altogether different experience'. It is said perhaps that only a cruel designer would follow such a path of mis-conceived, indeed un-ethical experimentation (here I am actually drawing on the implications of Moltmann's statements in other texts: some already met with in chapter three, others to be looked at in due course. Since in Theology of Hope Moltmann already goes so far as to say that no justification need be offered for the history of the world, I have assumed that this account of the eschatological future of a deficient

creation can be looked at with occasional reference to the more explicit and repeated criticism of theodicy in later writings).

It would seem then that for the sake of justice and coherence, that the designer would need to travel with his people, learning with them - and that this would have to be a necessary process: in making people fit and worthy of the new creation, and being the route which God would have to follow in setting up a life of spirit outwith, and in communion with himself. But this still carries the threat of incompetence. Surely the perfect designer could foresee basic hitches? To think in terms of the analogy, of a lack of seat belts, of the choice of an unnecessarily difficult and dangerous terrain. And then of course, there is the arguably crunch question of justifiability. Was it worth it? Were the innocent to die? Can one accept a situation in which, whatever traumatic and possibly ultimately morally unjustifiable events occur, a permanent limitation on intelligibility allows little more than a blind faith that the future will 'turn out right?'

The problem is that when we take it that there is no real dialectical process involved, in the classical sense, i.e., other than the simple overcoming of contradiction in the suffering world confronted by hope, then a model of Moltmannian 'inexhaustibility' takes on a dangerous shape. It appears that if there is a level '10' at which things are very good and expressive of God's perfection, one starts at '1' and moves by 'stages': purely because divine inexhaustibility likes to show that it is not exhausted in the pre-planetary dust swirl, or the famine prone static agrarian society; or even in organic life. One would usually say that the suffering, or the possibility of suffering, in the deficient levels was to be justified in the ascent to '10' through a balance of otherwise

unobtainable second order goods. Yet Moltmann does not say that there is such a justificatory ordering of goods and evils: God is somehow beyond the need to satisfy this kind of requirement. What would he say if one argued that a truly abundant God who is wholly good would not want to instantiate famines, diseases, oversee newly technological societies predictably overwhelming technically 'primitive' societies, and so on, in order to make a stately progress to '10', or suddenly decide to impose '10' (which is after all, what is affirmed as compatible with God) upon one? Would not want to do so unless there is some justification, as with worthwhile goods otherwise unobtainable. If there be any reason for doing so outwith those usually considered in theodicy, Moltmann has failed to provide it.

Is it perhaps that Moltmann's God sets his creation on the road of history just so he can demonstrate his faithfulness to his promise? This would be absurd if it was from the beginning possible to be faithful to oneself and to others. So does *being seen to be faithful* require that one fulfil a promise over time? It could be argued that where the situation prior to fulfilment involves the toleration of unjustifiable evils, then one has lost the right to be believed to be wholly good. That is, if one inflicts great suffering on humanity and on other species in order to simply show that one sticks to one's promises: even if this is the only way in which one is able to be seen to be a fulfiller of promises to contingent beings created *ex nihilo*. Moltmann has written : "To know God means to re-cognize him. But to re-cognize him is to know him in his historic faithfulness to his promises... The identifying of two experiences is possible only where there is self-identification, or the revelation of historic faithfulness, because this God guarantees his promises by his name" (T/H p117). This implies that God does not want to

be known directly, i.e., simultaneous with the creation of his agents, but that one needs to come to know God. Nevertheless, setting up a situation where people long for righteousness would seem to defeat the purpose. That is, God may be competent and wholly good when he chooses, but choosing to highlight this competence by way of contrast with a world of unjustifiable evils is not a defensible option.

There does seem to be something of a justification for suffering on page ninety-one, where self-emptying is identified, not for the only time, with the life of spirit. Thus for the recipient of revelation as promise:

"... it does not identify him by disregarding what is negative, but opens him to the 'dreadful power of the negative', as Hegel has said. It makes him ready to take the pain of love and self-emptying upon himself in the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead... 'The power of the spirit is only so great as its outgoing, its depth only so deep as the extent to which in its expending it ventures to spread itself and to lose itself.' Thus the promised identity of man leads into the differentiation of self-emptying."

Still, if we take account of the fact that Moltmann has said elsewhere that he will not embrace classical dialectic (one where evil would for theodicy purposes need to be justifiable), then this is rather like saying that the practical and caring skill of the surgeon in treating multiple tumours is only so deep as the amount of experience allows. And that such utilisation of caring potential (given the way the world is) is a good and worthwhile thing to come by. This blurs the differences between the God who creates out of nothing, and contingent creatures. Where evils are unjustifiable - appear, as in Theology of Hope, as incompatible with the rule of God and viciously unintelligible, it is arguably pointless to think of God and spirit, wholly good, as 'deepening' themselves by entering into untold sufferings. The theodicy debate conventionally suggests, and with good reason, that suffering cannot be seen as unjustifiable where God is claimed to be wholly good.

What is the thinking on human dignity in Moltmann's theology here? It seems that real dignity is a matter of the future. Of the comandments it can be said that "Their goal is the reality of that human dignity which is vouchsafed to men through fellowship with the God of promise" (T/H p122). Moltmann, as we have seen, favours a cosmic overview of the human situation. Thus 'being' itself becomes 'historic' (T/H p137). And, "Without apocalyptic a theological eschatology remains bogged down in the ethnic history of men or the existential history of the individual". Indeed, we need to look to "the wide vistas of the cosmos and beyond the limitations of the given cosmic reality" (ibid).

One way of clarifying the coherence of Moltmann's attitudes to such situations would be to see what he has to say in real detail about God's goodness. Yet 'good' is a term which rarely appears, and where it does, it is often tied to critique of 'Greek' metaphysics. Thus, in such a critique of a metaphysical conception of Jesus: "... the highest eternal idea of goodness and truth has found its most perfect teacher in him" (T/H p140). And then, if:

"... the divinity of God is seen in his unchangeableness, immutability, impassibility and unity, then the historic working of this God in the Christ event of the cross and resurrection becomes as impossible to assert as does his eschatological promise for the future." (ibid)

There is a tendency here to speak of everlasting goodness alongside notions of dangerous immutability. I am not suggesting that Moltmann thinks the idea of God's being wholly good falls with doctrines of immutability. It is simply that this is the context where it is referred to, and there is no adequate analysis of what this statement might mean in terms of compatibility, entailments, and the theodicy question, elsewhere. There is the puzzling theme that God delays the full revelation of his righteousness, and that this is the kind of flexibility

we should look for in God. This feature not only characterises Theology of Hope, but Moltmann's other work. As will be seen in The Trinity and The Kingdom of God, Moltmann does not wish to assert that God changes in any essential way. This is of course not incompatible with his living with a joyful and free creation. But its compatibility with the kind of cosmic picture Moltmann paints is questionable.

At this point it is as well to note the paradoxical attitudes shown in Moltmann's treatment of the 'Greek' view of God, where we may equate this with an emphasis on eternal values and unchanging righteousness, even freedom from death. At one point Moltmann holds of God: "His attributes cannot be expressed by negation of the sphere of the earthly, human, mortal and transient..." (T/H p141). Nevertheless, it is God's promise which allows us to see that righteousness is opposed to death and transience. God most essentially means that which gives and preserves life, lovingly and for ever. Is there a tension here? Where, for instance, it is said of the promise that it: "places the one who receives it in a position of insurmountable antithesis and hostility to the existing reality of the world"? (T/H p143)

I believe that where Moltmann attacks notions of history as facade, where the gospel supervenes as the revelation of eternal truths, his own position is relatively vulnerable. Is it the case that the righteousness of God is an eternal truth, and that this righteousness is never deviated from? The point would be irrelevant were it not for Moltmann's 'weak' reading of history, where its integrity and meaning is in question. The ostensible rejection of dialectic, and the intense emphasis on the futurity of things and their integrity, makes the historicity of reality a record of deprivation and transcendence. By contrast, the nature of the

new creation is fully compatible with everlasting values which truly encompass God's righteousness. So is the pre-history that is this creation a *tableau* of unjustifiable suffering ended by the artifice of the *deus ex machina*? There is a danger of it looking like this.

On the question of ancient metaphysics of stability to which Moltmann opposes the concept of genuine history: what if one falls victim to the cultus of the presence of eternity? Moltmann writes: "History... loses its eschatological direction. It is not the realm in which men suffer and hope, groaning and travailing in expectation of Christ's future for the world, but it becomes the field in which the heavenly lordship of Christ is disclosed in Church and sacrament" (T/H p159). Is this any more affirmative of actual human history and growth than a creed of qualified world-God correspondence? The alternative is a theology of flawed creation, where: "The resurrection has set in motion an eschatologically determined process of history, whose goal is the annihilation of death..."? (T/H p163) Where: "... eschatology of promise... makes faith and obedience possible... by enabling us to believe... in the overcoming of these contradictions by God" (ibid). There seems to be no middle way.

On the topic of eternal presence, Moltmann differs in his view of its timing. It is certainly desirable. He writes:

"Eternal presence is... the eschatological goal of history, not its inmost essence. Creation is therefore not the things that are given and lie to hand, but the future of these things, the resurrection and the new being." (T/H p164)

The statement, which comes shortly after, that the promise becomes the 'torture' of history (T/H p165), makes sense when we realise the profound depth of the inadequacy of this world in this schema. Moltmann utilises Hegel's conception of the speculative Good Friday of all that is. If Good

Friday is "conceived... as the abyss of nothingness that engulfs all being, then there arises on the other hand the possibility of conceiving this foundering world in theological terms as an element in the process of the now all-embracing and universal revelation of God in the cross and resurrection of reality" (T/H p168). Until The Crucified God, The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, and God in Creation, it is arguable that we get no consistent idea of why this process should be happening at all; and even in the later texts it is inexplicable why this situation should be considered compatible with God's being perfectly good.

Is Moltmann an Hegelian? Consider the following. It is stated, in the context of a number of references to epochal Hegelian utterances, that:

"... the romanticist notion of the 'death of God'... is an element that has been isolated from the dialectical process and is therefore no longer engaged in the movement of the process to which it belongs." (T/H p169)

Or is he not an Hegelian? When:

"... the god-forsakenness of the cross cannot, as in Hegel, be made into an element belonging to the divine process and thus immanent in God. A theology of the dialectical self-movement of absolute Spirit would then only be a modification of the dialectical epiphany of the eternal as subject." (T/H p171-2)

In the light of the second statement we can interpret the first as a description of the fact that God loves his lost Son so much, that being God he will bring him back to new life: that it is mistaken to think otherwise. This does not help to explain why this 'god-forsakenness of the cross' has occurred as something compatible, correlative, with the existence of a God who is wholly good. Ultimately, I have come to believe that whether we chose to interpret Moltmann as modifying the Hegelian tradition, or as bitterly opposed to such dialectical processes, or as alternating between these positions (and there is some room for debate here), neither position, taken along with his thinking on suffering and

theodicy, is able to prevent a legitimate call for radical re-structuring being made. That is, once we recognise the implications of unjustifiable suffering.

Moving on, theodicy demands are arguably only strengthened when it is held that the world must be understood as wholly contingent upon God. Only on these grounds does the resurrection, itself contingent, "become intelligible as *nova creatio*" (T/H p179). God's sovereignty and creative freedom is emphasised. This makes it more difficult to understand the basis of the following view, where the cross and resurrection are contrasted. We must remember that only in this world is the cross possible or intelligible: "The two experiences [cross and resurrection] stand in radical contradiction to each other, like death and life, nothing and everything, godlessness and the divinity of God" (T/H p198). Because of this antithesis and the threat of unintelligibility, it is as important as ever to try and understand why the deficient world, the suffering world, the world of the cross, has been created. Again, at times it seems as if there is a divine interaction at the root of things, as on page two hundred and twenty. There, in the event of cross and resurrection, "God confesses to God and reveals his faithfulness". And resurrection "... must then be understood as the eschatological coming to pass of the faithfulness of God, and at the same time as the eschatological authentication of his promise and as the dawning of its fulfilment." God is being faithful to God. But is this being faithful to what it would mean to be wholly good, when the dimension of contingent suffering is causally connected with the opportunity for the manifestation of such faithfulness? I will argue against this being so.

So far as creation is concerned, God's righteousness is to come in the new creation (T/H p204-5). Indeed "The righteousness of God then refers not merely to a new order for the existing world, but provides creation as a whole with a new ground of existence and a new right to life" (ibid). And: "... Hence with the coming righteousness of God we can expect also a new creation" (T/H p205). Moltmann sees righteousness not simply as remission of sins, in which it does not find its "measure", but as new life in the risen Christ (T/H p206). This would suggest that the kind of world where God forgives major sins is something secondary to that world in which a complete existence is experienced as a human right. As is said, the divine righteousness "embraces forgiveness of guilt and annihilation of the destiny of death" (T/H p207). So, are life and death irreconcilables? In the religion of promise "We have our life in praising God, hoping in him and giving thanks to him. Death therefore means that we are far from God and he from us" (T/H p209). Resurrection hope proclaims "the victory of praise and therewith of love over death and over the curse of god-forsakenness, by announcing the victory of God over the absence of God" (T/H p210). For a theologian who never proffers a theodicy, who indeed comes to make scathing comments upon it, the equation of death with the absence of God is problematic. Where has God been? Did he abandon the world, and not foresee what would happen? Keeping in mind the reasons for the future bracketing of any real answer to the question of evil, prospects for understanding what it means to say that God is wholly good are worsened when Moltmann holds that: "In the cross we can recognize the god-forsakenness of all things, and with the cross we can recognize the real absence of the kingdom of God in which all things attain to righteousness, life and peace" (T/H p224). In fact, the world "cannot bear" the resurrection: we need a new world (T/H p226).

In the theodicy question, it is normally taken that God is responsible for the world in the sense that evils not justified by the free will defence, are to be justified directly as events created/permitted to provide an environment and structuring of reality and life which are causally connected to the bringing about of worthwhile second order goods. Moltmann holds that God can create "real objective possibilities" for his mission. In which instance, in regard to Moltmann's overall position on theodicy, we ask why he did not from the beginning create possibilities specifically excluding the possibility of unjustifiable evils? For instance, on page two hundred and eight-nine it is stated that the world has "boundless possibilities for good and evil". No rationale need be given for why a perfectly good God would tolerate them. The new creation is however free from "nothingness" The advertised differences between it and this world seem its main attractions. It is asserted: "... the glory and misery of past ages do not require to contain the justification of God or of reason" (T/H p291). And we are attaining "... freedom from the powers of annihilation" (ibid). Certainly one question which many conventional theodacists and atheist anti-theodacists would ask, is if there is perhaps no justificatory rationale behind the suffering in the first creation, then why is there such a creation? I now look briefly at Religion, Revolution and the Future, and Hope and Planning, to see how they develop aspects of Moltmann's theology relevant to the theodicy question.

CHAPTER FIVE

I shall not give a description of these texts prior to offering a critique: presentation and critique is combined. First to Hope and Planning (1969).¹ Much of what is said in the essays is similar in spirit to Theology of Hope. Thus the first chapter "The Revelation of God and the Question of Truth", deals in part with the question of eschatological revelation and present contradiction. If revelation is understood as the resurrection of the crucified one, then "truth must also be understood eschatologically and dialectically" (H/P p15). What is Christian does not correspond to reality. This, Moltmann notes, can be an argument against not only what is Christian, but reality itself. What is done? We are directed to consideration of the contradiction of the cross, suggesting as it does that "God and reality are analogies which do not yet exist". Faith overcomes the contradiction in the hope engendered by the resurrection. God's "future and his glory" intercede for creation. Here: "... conformity with his word is possible only in confession to the cross; anticipation of the future of his truth is possible only within the experience of history, that is, in solidarity with the suffering of the eager expectation of creation" (HP p16-17). It is clear that anticipation of righteousness involves suffering.

The passages "The dialectic of love in alienation" and "The dialectic of hope in death" (H/P p46-50), make the affirmation that death is a profound negation, negated in the resurrection. The 'dialectic' is that of the humanising of the dying, tortured, and the alienated (see H/P p47-8). Moltmann states:

"How can I identify myself with physical life when I have still physically to await death and the decay of happiness - and I experience it daily in loss and disappointments? Conversely, how can I live at all without identifying myself with this transitory, guilty,

and mortal existence? Love in which a man surrenders himself and identifies himself with this vulnerable earthly life and hope in the resurrection belong together... The resurrection hope prepares the way for a life of total sacrifice." (ibid)

Significantly:

"Love is supposed to be stronger than death, yet love experiences death as a power which is inhuman and contrary to God. Therefore the dialectic of love in alienation still once more points out beyond itself. Certainly it is itself already the power of the transformation of life, but only under the conditions of agony and death. It does not conquer death... It does not save creation. It is, however, the analogy to that qualitative transformation of existence and therefore lives from the hope of the kingdom. We now come to the final and broadest horizon of the interpretation of the God-event in the crucified Christ. It is the eschatological horizon in which God is confronted with the misery of all creation, which cries to heaven." (HP p49)

This reflects the most pessimistic elements of Theology of Hope. Misery is the key-note of this world as it stands, and as it will ever be without the hope and the reality of future wholeness. What of the dialectic of 'love in alienation'? It involves our love of the suffering, entry into suffering, in the power of the resurrection. As yet though, it has the appearance of a problematic transformation scene (however genuine the love), rather than that of an intelligible dialectic, or one which in its evaluation of common experience looks like offering a positive resolution to the question of evil (for death to be a natural feature would make Moltmann's approach untenable in its emphasis on the contradiction between death and God's creative righteousness, whilst the idea of universal and terrible mortality as a consequence of sin has severe moral problems too).

"Exegesis and the Eschatology of History" (H/P p56ff) argues that God's faithfulness to man is the essence of our historicity (H/P p108). We acquire our future thence; not through any resort to cyclical patterns, technology, or the "ever-tempting subterfuges of history into nature.." (ibid). The seriousness with which Moltmann takes the question of true

future orientated historical being in the eschatological horizon which God has opened up for us, is evident in his discussion of Christian social ethics. Natural law (Ellul); unchangeable basic structures (Brunner); conditions of man's historical life (Althaus); God's "fundamental structures... for... human society", are all ideas rejected in the light of the impossibility of normative social realities. Impossibilities in a process driven by the successive actions of God in relation to his eschatological people of the future (H/P p115-18):

"The eschatological community of God cannot be absorbed or fitted into a social structure.../ The dilemma of Christian social ethics is decisively attached to the fact that theology dares to give man hope for himself but not for the conditions in which he works and suffers, in which love requires that he sacrifice himself." (H/P p124-5)

In chapter six, "The End of History", Moltmann reflects for a time on the phrase "Eschatology swallows up history" (H/P p168). Its significance is in its potency as a "naïve expression" of a sense of something present already: its hope expresses less about the future than about human nature. In fact though, God's relationship to the world promises revolutionary consequences:

"As identity is promised to man and comes into view, he observes his permanent non-identity in historical terms. As the full lordship of God and physical freedom is promised to men and brought into view, he (humanity) begins to suffer from the God-forsakenness of the world and the inhumanity of man in it... In this difference he experiences in himself solidarity with all the eager longings of creation, which is subject to futility (Rom 8.18ff)." (H/P p172)

With this, the futility of creation, one requires a "hope... which is directed towards... the solution of real contradictions, towards the negation of the negative through the God of the resurrection" (H/P p174). And in this hope: "one can make the stones of historical circumstances dance when one tries to sing that melody which, on the basis of the transcendence of death and whatever is transitory, allows the future of reconciliation to resound over its [the worlds] cemeteries" (H/P p177).

In "Hope and Planning" (H/P p178ff), Christian hope is a "transcendent impetus": the exhaustion of anticipatory dispositions in realised possibilities does not hide this. For Christian hope is aimed "not only towards the overcoming of this or that inconvenience, but ultimately towards the overcoming of death... [it is] a 'hope against hope'." (ibid p195). Such hope brings suffering, not only from "earthly anguish but, even more a suffering from the anguish of the world" (ibid). The distance between hope, expectation, and the final realisation of anticipations is (once more) the motor, the mainspring, the torture of history (H/P p196).

The interesting essay on theology and science (H/P p200ff) strongly implies a dialectical understanding of the realisation of God's presence in the world. In this it stands apart from the others, and even contradicts them: there are also puzzling internal discrepancies. It is argued that the Cartesian distinction between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* encouraged a conception of mind or spirit as divided by a gulf from nature (H/P p202), the consequence being theological self-mutilation, a natural world without salvation; a "retreat into the ghetto", and unproductive opposition of subjectivity and objectivity. Whereas they are in truth related, together constituting what is described as "the totality of historical existence". Salvation of the whole is "gained or lost within the historical process of reconciliation between man and nature" (H/P p205: c.f. treatment of Bloch's 'home of identity' in R/RF). The concept of openness in history is prominent here. There is a totality which "is not only hidden from knowledge but does not yet itself exist". Crucially, reality moves towards this whole in an "open history" (H/P p212). There is real mediation and differentiation in history. Humanity, as the subject of knowledge and work stands not

only in a subject-object relationship with nature, but also as such "*with it in a history*". Indeed, Moltmann goes on to describe a human/nature dialectic. For:

"He [man] has nature and grasps hold of it and, in this way, *is* at the same time himself that nature which develops itself further within him and his world. In that open future... The subject-object relationship between subjectified man and objectified nature becomes obvious in his dialectical entanglement. It both has history and brings about history." (H/P p213)

Man is a being on the move, and as long as the question of truth is an open question, he is aware of the "finiteness and temporality of his plans" (ibid). And so: "He finds no rest in his own plans and pictures, but with them moves out into the openness of history" (ibid).²

One of the questions that might be asked of the passage p212-4, is whether Moltmann sees a creative dialectical pattern emerging in the life of reality moving towards the truth or the whole? A pattern independent in its integrity, of the Christ-event as crucifixion and resurrection: of the whole inextricable theological nexus of Easter's overcoming absolute death, negativity, god-forsakenness, and closed horizons? The answer is no. For the outline of the putative dialectic of man and nature is immediately followed by the argument: the cross is understood in its "universal significance" from the crisis of everything in the last judgement. The resurrection is:

"understood only in the context of a transformation of the world... Seen from this future of history the appearance of Christ becomes meaningful... through his appearance, the consciousness of a universal end of history has come into the world." (H/P p214)

Nevertheless, on page two hundred and twenty the future of salvation is that of the whole, which is "more and more at stake here in human history". However, humanity must reconcile the "historical goals of human activity" with the ultimate future of crisis. In practical terms this is rather sketchy. For instance, theology is to "enter into that

intermediate area between world preservation and world consummation" (ibid). It is said:

"The future of salvation, like that of condemnation, has never transcended history so that one could surrender oneself to it in fatalism or indifference, but rather in the process of history already acquires a shape so that one will only be able to find it by searching for it." (ibid)

It seems here that the future promised in the Christ event is somehow one that can be set alongside, and not external to the human/ nature dialectic. Still, critically, it cannot be said to originate there; it explodes the human-nature dialectic, at least insofar as it subjects the *status quo* to radical transformation outwith its dialectical horizons. Perhaps one can read the shape of the future salvation by looking at history, as Moltmann does, as a record of death and sorrow. The shape of salvation then becomes the negation of the negatives of the world.

One is told that "natural knowledge" is placed in the "open question of the ultimate future" (H/P p215). This open question is seeking an answer to give meaning to existence, though not apparently expecting any from the dynamics of this world:

"If this is a hope which is not only directed towards the possible consequences of activity and its results, but also reaches out beyond all things visible and possible towards a meaning for everything that happens here, then it is a hope which receives certainty in the face of total uncertainty: 'Death where is thy sting? Hell, where is thy victory?' (I Cor.15.55)" (H/P p217)

Religion, Revolution and the Future is a collection of essays on eschatological themes. They cover the conception of the church appropriate to the horizon of hope; Bloch's messianic Marxism; the present sociological significance of a new creation; and intimations of what this new creation might be in itself. Moltmann's understanding of the world to be negated is underlined in the following words:

"I believe that Rauschenbusch was right when he said: 'Ascetic Christianity called the world evil and left it. Humanity is waiting for a revolutionary Christianity which will call the world evil and

change it." (R/R/F p34-35, quoting Rauschenbusch Christianity and Social Crisis New York 1964 p91)

With such a reference evil might be conceived of as the present social/political reality. Yet, as is now evident, there is more:

"What is the abundance of life? The death of death. What is complete freedom? The elimination of nothingness itself, which threatens and cajoles everything that exists and insults everything that wants to live but must die." (R/R/F p34)

Page thirty-five is headed "The vision of God and the new creation". The biblical creation faith has two highly significant features. Creation out of nothing is a creation "*within* the sea of nothingness". Creation out of chaos is creation "*within* chaos" (Moltmann's emphasis). This, it is said, is the Genesis account's figurative expression of the fact that creation embodies being and non-being. It is a creation open for destruction and redemption. Destruction is an immediate possibility. Realisation of its perfectibility will only result from "process". The "experimental field of destructive and constructive possibilities is laid out" (R/R/F p36). Moltmann feels this experimental field has become exhausted of/inadequate in constructive possibilities: "The resurrection pictures, which have been attempted, are pitifully inadequate because the colours for painting the future must be taken from the already spoiled palette of life in the here and now" (R/R/F p35).

Of interest again is the distinction between creation as an expression of God's will, and its perfection as God's actual in-dwelling, in a new creation in which "affliction, pain, and work are overcome" (R/R/Fp36). As we shall see, this distinction occurs elsewhere. The potent symbols alpha and omega occur: "Omega is more than alpha. Only if the 'end is good' can all things be called 'good.' The vision of the new creation is the vision of a successful world experiment" (ibid).

Here Moltmann has made an apparent gesture in the direction of theodicy, albeit a risky one. There are arguably three broad options available (in respect of the statement). Position one is that of those say that where an end situation is of itself pleasant and 'good', that does not mean that it is one whose value is immune from questions such as 'were there great evils perpetrated or permitted in order to reach this state, and were they morally justifiable?' If they are unjustifiable, then if necessary to bring about omega, omega is neither desirable, nor the work of a wholly good being. The second position could be termed by supporters of the first, 'naive.' Its adherents would be aware of previous unjustifiable evils, but cast the supposed virtue of the present, and its status as the expression of the love of the wholly good being over the problems of the suffering which it has displaced, and so *de facto* obliterate them as genuine 'problem'. Exactly how is never clear (in its genuine form, this problem has two possible outcomes; (1) there is evil which is incompatible with the existence of a wholly good God; (2) the evil which exists is not incompatible with the existence of a wholly good God; there is also the position that we do not yet know the answer. The resort to simple eschatological verification is arguably unsatisfactory, since, as I have argued, the fact that a god exists is no evidence that we are in the presence of a wholly good god (God). Moltmann seems to rely on a god's making himself known, and being good to us to resolve the issues. Still, the occurrence of even cosmic epiphanies is hardly enough to let the crucial theodicy questions lapse). The third position is one of 'amnesia'. The omega present is good, and that is all one need dwell on. Moltmann tends to position two, even if he claims at times that unjustifiable suffering leaves permanent questions. For to be within position one requires a conventional theodicy approach, and

overall, Moltmann is apparently prepared to tolerate indelible unjustifiable suffering so long as there is 'omega'.

More than this the first creation is in its openness to deficiency an apparently essential preliminary to a wholeness characterised by the "infinite richness of the new" and "eternal play" before God (ibid). As God comes to dwell in the midst of this new creation, "all beings will take part in his creativity". And "The deadly antagonisms of present history will be transformed into the dialectic of eternal life according to the analogy of the transformation of work into play" (ibid).

With God's new creation there cannot be the kind of "ambivalence" between being and non-being which distinguishes this creation (ibid). Moltmann states: "... the future new being with which history experiments here cannot be tediously repetitious" (ibid). He continues in a manner which casts doubt over the appropriateness of the analogy of work transformed into play: "The new creation is to be a creation without the penetrating shadows of the 'night' and without the threatening 'waters of the flood'. It is no longer... a *creatio in nihilo*, but a new being which participates in the infinite creative being of God" (R/RF p36). Thus the "quantitative" future of our tomorrow is "infused with the qualitative future" of the new creation (R/RF p37). The quantitative future is the sphere in which the new creation will work some of its magic, as the morning may greet the new day. But to look to the past is to be in its power, as a "wasteland" where "things cease to exist" (ibid).

Moltmann looks to concrete utopias where the present historical negatives, economic, political and racial alienation ("definite estrangements of man from his true essence and his future") are overcome.

A vision of God and of the new creation allow current initiatives the strength to succeed (R/RF p38-41). Unfortunately some parts of the discussion are unclear. The list of present negatives and their remedies appears within the scope of humanist visions of reconciliation, *if they indeed function as the ground of the central alienations*. With an understanding of Moltmann's theology of a god-forsaken cosmos, it seems that they are not at all the central alienations. They may be symptoms of something deeper. Of what consequence then to historical existence are the *non-historic* alienating negatives? (ie ultimate negatives), most especially since Moltmann can clearly envisage, here at least, a concrete utopia where the other alienations alone are negated?

The concept of productive antagonisms is introduced in the vision of a new creation, as the overcoming of "the present negatives of life" (R/RF p40). This new creation will be realised in "concrete utopias" which summon and "make sense out of" "present initiatives" for doing away with the present negatives. Such ambiguity as to how present negatives relate to non-historical negatives is confusing. Overcoming of economic, political, and racial alienation in the present is undermined by Moltmann's perception of the evil of death, and the nothingness around us; is rendered somehow secondary to the joyous realisation of the manifesto of God's righteousness in the new creation itself. It of course raises the problem of God's existence being at all compatible with the existence of such fundamental deficiencies.

The following words from the chapter "Resurrection as Hope" are suggestive of the conventional theodicy problem which I have already outlined. However, its criteria are supplanted by an image of the

theodicy question resolved in the satisfaction of a hunger for a world that is recognisable as God's:

"The last great philosophies and theologies of history, from Bossuet (and Voltaire) to Hegel and Droysen, among others, were at their core always theodicy projects. After the catastrophes of our century we know that history writing is incapable of a theodicy. But even though we are unable to come up with a justification of God from the processes of history, the question of the meaning of history continues to remain open in spite of the failure of our attempts at justification. To raise the theodicy question, and along with it to question the future of history, does not already mean to be able to answer it. But suffering and evil, on the one hand, and the indelible memory of hope, on the other, raise this question for us. In a godless world we hunger for righteousness upon the earth, that is, for a world which we can recognize as God's world." (R/RF p55)

Moltmann then introduces the possibility of an unusual theodicy. For:

"If the world, the way it is, would proffer a theodicy, we would need no faith. But if there were no theodicy question, where would the risk of faith be? (Martin Buber)." (R/RF p55)

It is being claimed that faith revolves around the commitment in risk to the idea that God exists and loves the world. If it were to become self-evident that such a God exists, the kind of valuable faith we now have would evaporate. Therefore the kind of world in which we cannot know that God exists, given the possibility that evil may be justifiable, or not justifiable, is one that is good in that it requires a particular commitment to God. I am not sure whether Moltmann means this to be taken as merely an important by-product of uncertainty, or as an argument in favour of it being the kind of opaque world it is. Certainly, if the latter, it is a theodicy argument. But it is also a theodicy argument which requires some complex and emotive balancing to be performed if one is to put real emphasis upon it: this would be un-Moltmannian. The theodicy question soon rears its head again (R/RF p59-60). Moltmann argues that nature "with its orders and chaos" cannot give an answer to this question, nor can history, a mere "'mishmash of error and brute force' (Goethe)." For:

"An answer can only come from the future, from the new creation. With this expectation we attempt to change the present, so that the world

becomes the world of God."

Echoing previous thought:

"... such a presence of God can be fulfilled... only if the negatives of death, suffering, tears, guilt and evil have disappeared... in a new creation... in which ontologically speaking, being and non-being are no longer intertwined." (R/RF p61)

Nevertheless, what of the importance of political and social liberation? Pre-modern cosmologies imaged the problem of evil and suffering in a way very different to that of contemporary thought, says Moltmann. The theodicy question therefore no longer has its traditional guise, but again, "has become more of a political and social question" (R/RF p100). The consequences of this are that "persons and groups of men are to find their identity in history - not apart from it". This identity is located "only in concrete historical identification with projects directed toward overcoming human misery and enslavement" (R/RF p101).

Are there such projects? Indeed - : "Many of the revolutions which today go through Africa, Asia... embody the right to be free and to determine one's own destiny so that one can live in a truly human way and find his own identity" (R/RF p105). But, as Moltmann makes clear, social and political (for instance secular independence) action by itself is limited, and Christians should "actualize the freedom of faith in an unfree world and justification in a repressive society" (ibid). Moreover, "The social and political commitment of Christians errs if there does not stand behind and within it the vivifying expectancy of God's own presence... If there were no hope for the coming of God himself, everything else would be only a renovation of the prison" (ibid). There needs to be hope against the "metaphysical evil of nothingness, and against the religious anguish over the pain of mortality" (R/RF p106). There is a "nothingness" at whose "boundary everything everything that is

exists" (ibid). So, one hopes that with the coming of the presence of God, "contradictions wholly other than social, political, and personal ones shall cease" (ibid). God's presence will change the "ontic condition of all things and relationships" (R/RF p107): will end the political suffering of the world in which humanity "struggles against, but also brings forth evil" (R/RF p100).³

So, God's rule is directed towards that "full humanity which is denied by poverty, hunger, illness, and suffering" (R/RF p122-3). It is nevertheless curious how his righteousness is never seriously brought into question by the overwhelming ontic deficiencies in creation, of which these factors are arguably symptoms. Critics might ask, where, if full humanity is denied by illness, mortality fits in? Was it moral to create a world where the sin of some would snowball into the certain (or seeming) annihilation of all? If illness is de-humanising, then universal death as punishment or consequence of past behaviour is intolerable in a system which, in its moral sensitivity, rejects the feasibility of theodicy. Even death as a natural but dehumanising feature becomes inexplicable. Significantly, Moltmann ends his chapter on "New Frontiers of Christianity" with a pessimistic assessment of this creation, although he is not without hope:

"all our social programs, declarations of independence, and humanistic designs encounter such a void that their courses seem to disappear into the sands of 'nothingness'... the man of faith has reason to hope for the destruction of this 'nothingness' by the God who creates out of nothing." (R/RF p127-8)

Moltmann straightforwardly emphasises the "deadliness" of death. The Christian hopes in the God who creates out of nothing, who takes seriously the fact that this deadliness of death comes from the *nihil*. "Death is not one phenomenon among others, of which none affects the ego" (R/RF p169). Life can find no point in which it gains immunity from

death. There is infinite antithesis (ibid). Yet there is this "dialectical point of transformation constituted by the resurrection of the crucified Christ". Life can then be accepted as "life unto death" in faith in him who creates "life out of death" (ibid). Life in trust can "lose itself and be gained precisely in so doing". Moltmann quotes from A Camus' The Plague; Rieux's words - that the plague had "'robbed us all of the capacity for love and even for friendship. For love requires a little future, and for us there was nothing more than moments'" (R/RF p169). So, Moltmann holds: "Love always requires a little future". Indeed the life of love positively requires the expectation of resurrection in order to function (ibid). With faith in the God who so raises, love can in Hegel's words, "'hold fast what is dead'" (R/RF p170). But:

"... the reverse is also true: The future which is gained by the resurrection of Christ is truly recognised and truly accepted only in the love which expends itself even unto death." (ibid)

There is a problem here. Let us say that human beings have existed for a million years, if not far longer. Real people: and that a million years be represented by twenty-four hours. Then Moltmann's real promise of resurrection has entered upon the scene of life and death shortly after three minutes to midnight. Why is it that we are granted an extraordinary privilege, which would have allowed our ancestors to have loved and lived truly? At least forty thousand generations dead. Why so long to make the stones of historical circumstance dance? We can hold fast what is dead. But what of them, not now, but then? These are important questions, which if what Moltmann says about love and existence is true, would demand an answer. I do not think Moltmann can give an answer. His critical contrast of two passages, one of Thomas Münzer's writing, and the other of Martin Luther's (R/RF p171), heightens the sense that his stance on human ontology is centred on a perception of our glaring

inadequacy (still unintelligible, in the light of God goodness, and dislike for the way things have been set up in this world). For Münzer, and others of Bloch's claimed antecedents, did not know: "... the love which accepts the earth's pain and the suffering of obedience in love because it finds hope for *the earth and for the body*" (ibid - my emphasis).

I conclude discussion of Religion Revolution and the Future with a brief look at the section "The Future as New Paradigm of Transcendence" and the chapter "Hope and History". These contain provocative and interesting ideas that thread their way through Moltmann's major texts. For example:

"Only a future which transcends the experiment of history itself can become the paradigm of the transcendence and give meaning to the experiment 'history'. The 'utopia of the beyond' explodes all known world conditions." (R/RF p196)

However Moltmann is aware that two problems need mentioning in order that the dialectic be made clearer. One can over-emphasise the qualitative distinction between present and the eschatological future. But one can also over-emphasise a sense of continuity and correspondence. In the first instance history becomes a "vale of tears"; resignation ensues (R/RF p197). With the second, continuity leads us to think of a never-ending transcendence of the present as the "essence of history itself": Moltmann thinks there must be some mediative way out of his dilemma:

"A meaningful mediation seems to result only if the transcendence which is beyond history is linked with man's act of transcending within history; if in the midst of the critical difference one believes in the possibilities of correspondence, and if conversely, in the possibilities of correspondence, the qualitative difference is kept in mind." (R/RF p198)

Further detail comes with the idea that: "'systematic transcendental criticism' joins itself with 'systematic immanent criticism', and the openness of a qualitatively new future is linked with concrete steps for bringing about a qualitatively better correspondence" (ibid). Given the

qualitative antithesis though, I would argue that this does not yet appear to mediate effectively between the historical, and the eschatological which explodes "all known world conditions". Moltmann presents Christ as the immanence of the transcendent, in solidarity with the oppressed. The impact is lessened by his having already characterised social action as 'renovation of the prison'. Nevertheless there is some sense of active anticipation:

"The transcendence of the future of a 'wholly other' begins dialectically in establishing those who, in a settled present and in static societies, are 'the others.'" (R/RF p199)

This though seems to beg the question of why there should be a creation, which, in its openness to, and inextricability from the *nihil*, wholly transcends the eschatological new creation.

With "Hope and History" (R/RF p200ff), the theodicy question is identified as fundamental (R/RF p204ff). There is more. Eschatology reveals the "reality" of the world as history. Faith in Christ allows one to view history, past and present, as the "history of the future of God" (R/RF p202). Unsurprisingly, Moltmann feels that differences between the church and other social institutions are relativised in the light of the overwhelming lines of separation between the power of the past, and the power of the future (ibid). Division is not spatial, but temporal. The power of the future world is brought through Christianity into the present.

It is hard to see how this transformative power of the future can be thought of in terms of the retro-active power of a future wrought dialectically from the present - a vicious circularity: future established on the present securing the present, in order that the present might be transformed into that future. Moltmann is apparently

talking of the present power of God (as perhaps in the repeated phrase, the 'power of the future') which will enable the present to become the future: of that which seems future to us, but is always a present possibility to God. But this seems to break the dialectical logic Moltmann is developing on the future of being. For instance: "Reality is not a permanent cosmos and does not consist in repeatable orders. Neither is it a chaos. *It is the historical process of the coming fullness of being*" (R/RF p217). But in contrast to this, whilst: "... process theology ... speaks of the 'becoming God' in the context of the dynamics of the world process. Eschatological theology... [on the other hand] speaks of the 'coming God' in the context of the dialectical dynamics, circumscribed by the symbols of *creatio ex nihilo*, *justificatio impii*, and *resurrectio mortuorum*" (R/RF p210). Still, Moltmann talks of the present historical sphere in risk language:

"The present becomes the frontier where the future is gained or lost. Traditional differences and conflicts become relative, if we can find the future together only in a common effort. Either we will all hang together now or we will all hang separately (Franklin)." (ibid)

And he once more sees the horizon of eschatology necessitating the emergence of the political dimension of theology: another sign in favour of a strong dialectical approach. In his treatment of the shift to an existential framing of the theodicy question - in the question of authentic humanity (cf. Theology of Hope), he again argues that the identity question "cannot be answered apart" from the social, political, and historical "particularities" of man. Man and world are mediated in history (R/RF p206), which means in "social, political, and technological" history. We will not find "inner identity" without "humanization" of the world (compare above). Here though, we must take account of Moltmann's penultimacy drive and its implications. It is not clear in what ways God's coming to be all in all is related to the

dialectic at work in the world. In his presentation of Pauline theology Moltmann sees Paul ask not only if God is, but "when he would become God fully" (R/RF p207). So, the problem of Christian theology is put as that of the future when "God will be God universally" (ibid). This may well be a different problem from that of the world dialectic, for God seems to burst open the world, rather than allow it to mediate his creativity and love in an unfolding of potential.

The discussion of "Future as God's Mode of Being With Us", returns to the subject of Old Testament notions of epiphany. Beside spatial characterisations of God in epiphany, there were also the temporal. Thus "The divinity of God will become manifest and real only in the coming of his unlimited reign" (R/RF p208). Here Moltmann wants to strengthen the concept of God as future, as well as God above, or God in us. The impression is of a God who is at one with a transcendent dialectic of some kind, one which masters and supercedes that of the evolving world. Thus:

"God is present in the way in which his future takes control over the present in real anticipations and prefigurations. But God is not as yet present in the form of his eternal presence. the dialectic between his being and his being-not-yet is the pain and the power of history... we are seeking his future, which will solve this ambiguity that the present cannot solve." (R/RF p209)

The future is not a "far away condition" but a power which "already qualifies the present". And, as "this power of the future, God reaches into the present" (ibid). So: "... God becomes the power of protest against the guilt that throws us into transiency and produces death, and he becomes also the ground of the freedom that renews life" (ibid).

Perhaps more important than understanding just how Moltmann views the power of God's future: whether as the innate but still unfolding power

which will allow God to become all in all; or as something already wholly to hand, is the realisation that this energy is directed against the present world. As the creative power of love it in fact seems unrelated to our creation, and distinctly interventionist - anyway, not in genuinely constructive partnership. We are also brought up against the question of responsibility. Why is God's righteousness directed against the world as it stands? Because God is righteous and cannot tolerate death and sorrow. But is this state of affairs God's fault? Is there ever a sense that the world was created by a righteous God who did not ever intend creatures to suffer so? One would conventionally assume that if God did know the potential for suffering in the world he set up, it was potential such as only existed in relation to connected justifying goods. Whether God is evolving this way or that towards his or her future, this question of righteousness is central. Moltmann avoids the powerful Hegelian tradition because of an apparent dislike of processual thought, and an emphasis on a personal conception of divine freedom. God may freely choose what to do. But surely this cannot contradict what is most deeply God's: the characteristic of being wholly good. If Moltmann wants to talk of God moving towards his future in any particular way, this cannot be at the expense of God's righteousness.

This brings us to what is said about guilt hurling humanity into transience.⁴ Guilt *producing* transiency and death. A belief like this appears to assign sin and guilt to an order of humanity originally without transience, a possibility casting severe doubt over the worth of the future life. Yet surely this is metaphorical talk. Have bears and tuna fish, fruit bats and sloths, sinned? Does the guilt of the howler monkey or the hump-back whale hurl it into transience, expose it to disease, open it to nothingness? And what about stick insects? No. It is

generally agreed mortality and disease are natural (I will discuss this important point in chapter eight). Diarrhoea, the disease which, worldwide, can kill up to eight thousand children a day, is a plainly natural phenomenon. Of course, human behaviour can increase greatly the potential for suffering and death. People actively seek to bring death to others, and knowingly fail to alleviate poverty and its causes. No one is murdered quite in the way that fruit falls from the branch. This is where analysis of freedom and responsibility would greatly help. Yet with Moltmann, such issues seem really secondary to the ontological deficiencies: massive short-comings which undermine the credibility and morality of assigning guilt and thus mortality to unfree creatures who are after all, mere shadows of their intended selves. It is this which raises the question of God's righteousness particularly strongly in Moltmann's theology.

In his final essay, the sense of positive creative process appears somewhat thwarted:

"The future realizes itself in history and as history and yet always rebounds from its own realisation in history... Every historical reality has in itself the intention to be an enduring, eternal reality, for everything which wishes to remain and not vanish. But no historical reality is already that prevailing historical reality; therefore, the prevailing reality transcends all historical realities and renders them once again historical realities." (R/RF p216)

We seem to be dealing with creative possibilities doomed, in this world at least, to a relativity signifying their incapability of reaching fulfilment, escaping from deadly transience. It is God who enables anticipation of the substantial future, and who in places seems to completely overshadow the creative process of history. Moltmann has distanced himself from process theology (R/RF p210), and has set out the reference points of the divine drama: those dialectical dynamics, circumscribed, as I have previously noted, by the symbols of "*creatio ex*

nihilo, justificatio impii, and resurrectio mortuorum" (R/RF p210). The way in which one symbol leads to the next is unclear. But as if to forestall a fatalistic conclusion, Moltmann brings the book to a close with the section entitled "Creative Eschatology - Political Theology".

Christian hope is to realise the Kingdom in the "conditions of history" for "we are construction workers" (R/RF p217). In looking to the future as the ultimate liberation of the world, the salvation of the "enslaved" creation, we must strive for the future, and "realize it already here according to the measure of possibilities" (R/RF p218). So Moltmann wants to talk of political theology. Indeed, Moltmann again thinks of the theodicy question as squarely occupying the political dimension (R/RF p219). If evil has become a political question then: "Christian faith in the creative righteousness of God and the liberation of the world out of its self-inflicted misery must become practically responsible exactly at this point" (ibid). But is it true that the world's misery is self-inflicted? For after describing the messianic tasks of humanity, Moltmann argues that:

"... exactly at this juncture we must consider that it is unreal to anticipate and work for the future if this future does not come toward us. The future in which we hope is never identical with the success of our activity, for our actions are as ambivalent as ourselves insofar as we are historical beings." (R/RF p220)

Because of this, eschatological faith should aim at the reconciliation of its better future, with the hoped-for future (ibid). He concludes:

"The liberating future of God enters into the possibilities and impossibilities of our history in a two-fold way: as exhortation of redemption from the guilt-laden coercion, which binds us to the past and hurls us into transience, and as demand for the renewal of life." (ibid)

In The Crucified God, Moltmann portrays the divine/human drama in great depth. And it is to this text that we must turn in order to see how his handling of the problem of evil develops. The questions arising from

Moltmann's conception of the *nihil* in present creation will be resolved against a wider and deeper theological presentation than either Hope and Planning or Religion Revolution and The Future were capable of providing. Meanwhile I would suggest that the burden of guilt and transience only prompts one to ask of the significance for our understanding of God's righteousness, of the need for a new creation in such contrast to the old. As for contributing to a theology of liberation, liberation from 'guilt-laden coercion' seems fine; so long as one remembers what Moltmann has said:

"What is the abundance of life? The death of death. What is complete freedom? The elimination of nothing-ness itself, which threatens and cajoles everything that exists and insults everything that wants to live but must die." (R/RF p34)

CHAPTER SIX

This chapter attempts to outline the central themes of The Crucified God, with emphasis on the way they relate to the problem of evil.¹ The critique is interwoven with this presentation.

The Crucified God, the second of Moltmann's major texts, is set the task of explicating the theological nexus of Jesus - cross - crucified God: excepting chapters one, seven, and eight. Each of the latter chapters is concerned either with the contemporary situation in which this explication takes place - a crisis of identity; or the implications for psychological and political liberation.

The short introductory section "In Explanation of the Theme", opens with the words: "The cross is not and cannot be loved. Yet only the crucified Christ can bring the freedom which changes the world because it is no longer afraid of death" (CG p1). In its way, this encapsulates much of the problem for Moltmann, where death and transience is so great a part of the tragedy of human existence, a state of affairs incompatible with the rule of God's righteousness.

The theology of the cross is to be the obverse of the theology of hope, and it gives strength to the latter through its apprehension of the pain of the negative, and its ability to give power to the visions which lead to action. There is a clear statement on how this treatment of the theology of the cross stands in relation to eschatological theology:

"Theology of Hope began with the *resurrection* of the crucified Christ, and I am now turning to look at the *cross* of the risen Christ." (CG p5)

He is, he says, moving from a Blochian theology of hope to look at the

questions of T Adorno's² "Negative Dialectic" and M Horkheimer's³ 'critical theory', and also the insights and experiences of early dialectical theology and existentialist philosophy (ibid). More immediately, in the first chapter of The Crucified God, the issue of context in articulation of a theology of the cross is discussed under the heading "The Identity and Relevance of Faith".

Moltmann sets out to put the cross at the centre of how to do Christian theology (CG p7). Today's question of what is Christian theology has a background in the problem of a faith struggling to be relevant, and identifying itself in contemporary concerns, or seeking to retain traditional dogma and becoming irrelevant.

The answer to this identity crisis, as Moltmann sees it, is the route into non-identity. It is by this way alone that true identity and integrity will be found. The wrong question to ask is what is specifically Christian. Rather: "... a man abandons himself as he was and as he knew himself to be, and, by emptying himself, finds a new self. Jesus's eschatological saying tells us that 'Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it'" (CG p15).

Wanting to leave one's present identity, and looking for Christian "non-identity" in engagement with society's current concerns is merely to become involved in a "religion of society" (CG p17). True Christian existence can only be experienced in the best of "all possible societies" (ibid). Nevertheless, that society too can "only stand under the cross." This is important. As in Moltmann's perspective on Bloch's home of identity,⁴ Christians will be alien even in a society without

conflict (ibid). For the cross:

"... does not make the world equal by bringing down the night in which everything looks alike, but by enabling people to criticise and stand back from... partial historical realities..." (ibid)

Overall, it appears that the maxim of the critique of incompleteness, of partial realisation, is directed at all historical realities - or rather, realities of life lived in pre-history (see also the account of 'vicious circles' CG p330ff, for clarification). It is in exile in present reality that home is sought, and in alienation that identity is pursued (both home and identity lying in the new creation). This understanding of alienation seems part of a dialectical understanding of the life of spirit. For: "love is revealed in hatred and peace in conflict" (CG p18). More on this shortly.

The critique of present social existence is revealing. The Kingdom of God is often conceived of as involving the individual's freedom, as having to do solely with persons. But Moltmann rejects the notion that individuals can be changed without reference to their circumstances: "Capitalism, racism and inhuman technocracy quietly develop in their own way. The causes of misery are no longer to be found in the inner attitudes of men, but have long been institutionalized" (CG p23). Alternatively, he notes, it is said that the Kingdom is an affair of changed circumstances and structures. Yet, although arguing that structures can be broken down, he concludes: "no guarantee is attached that men will be happy" (ibid).

The basis for this assesment lies in the following claims:

"The true front on which the liberation of Christ takes place does not run between soul and body or between persons and structure, but between the powers of the world as it decays and collapses into ruin, and the powers of the Spirit and of the future. In inner experience of the Spirit in the liberty of faith, certainty and prayer are just as much anticipations of the future of Christ and of the liberating of creation as the opening of a ghetto, the healing of a sick person, a new right to social justice or a succesful revolution for

independence."

And:

"There is no vertical dimension of faith opposed to a horizontal dimension of political love, for in every sphere of life the powers of the coming new creation are in conflict with the powers of a world structure which leads to death." (CG p24)

A theology of the cross takes identification with the crucified Christ as central:

"Christian theology finds its relevance in hope, thought out in depth and put into practice, in the kingdom of the crucified Christ, by suffering in 'the sufferings of this present time', and makes the groaning of the creation in travail its own cry for God and for freedom." (ibid)

Here we see how Moltmann considers the world as unfree, suffering, collapsing.

In his statement on "Revelation in Contradiction and Dialectic Knowledge" Moltmann expands on this theme of identity with the alienated, the "other" in society. The church in a "Christian" world could find correspondence between itself and society. The end of this compatibility has highlighted the need to take up 'dialectical' thinking. Moltmann refers to the Aristotelian principle of 'like seeks after like', and the Platonic 'like is known only by like'. With theology's adoption of this analogical tradition, the knowledge of God by what was unlike God became impossible (CG p27). It is argued: "If like is known only by like, then the Son of God would have had to remain in heaven, because he would be unrecognisable by anything earthly" (ibid). If Moltmann is attacking a hypothesis which says that the infinite can be known by the infinite alone, then there is clearly good reason to support his position. But he appears to be making a different move.⁵ As Schelling stated the axiomatic dialectical principle, it runs: "Everything can be revealed only in its opposite. Love only in hatred, unity only in conflict" (ibid

- quoting from K Rahner's 'Opfer' LthK VII, 1174). Moltmann draws the profound, and I would argue, difficult implications of this for an epistemology of the cross. God is in fact only revealed as such in his opposite. That is, God as God is (only) revealed in the paradox of the cross (ibid). More particularly, "He revealed his identity amongst those who had lost their identity" (ibid). Because of this the unrighteous rather than the righteous came to recognise him. It is said:

"The epistemological principle of the theology of the cross can only be this dialectic principle: the deity of God is only revealed in the paradox of the cross... One must become godless oneself and abandon every kind of self-deification or likeness to God in order to recognise the God who reveals himself in the crucified Christ." (ibid)

This, he holds, is not to replace the analogical principle - "like is known only by like", but to make it possible. It is because God is revealed in his opposite that he can be known by "the godless and those who are abandoned by God" (ibid). In this they are brought into correspondence with God, and as in John 1:3.2, are enabled to have the hope of being like God. The dialectic brings heaven down to earth, opening heaven to the godless. Hence: "The theology of the cross must begin with contradiction and cannot be built upon premature correspondences". And: "*If a being is revealed only in its opposite, then the church which is the church of the crucified Christ cannot consist of an assembly of persons who mutually affirm each other*" (CG p28: my emphasis). I do not see how this follows. It is added that the love in question here is not *philia* but *agape*; justification is that of the alien and not the similar.

It is not clear whether this dialectical principle (God is only revealed in his opposite) is axiomatic in the sense that (a) God must from the beginning reveal him/herself through its outworkings in transient world, cross, and resurrection: or (b) whether given that somehow there just is

bad finitude (a view which illegitimately obscures the topic of responsibility; see also the very weak analysis of human responsibility), God as righteous God has to reveal himself as that which contradicts the world.⁶ Option (a) seems contrary to what Moltmann has said about dialectic. It heightens questions of responsibility and what it means to say that God is wholly good, just. Option (b) really needs to answer why such bad finitude has arisen, when this world is created by God *ex nihilo* like the new creation. Is 'premature correspondence' of people to the righteousness of God being objected to where people are strangely flawed and sick but ultimately through no fault of their own - something outwith any intelligible analysis when we wish to examine the compatibility of this with God's nature? Or where there is some inescapable process of distancing and reconciliation? This appears unlikely, given Moltmann's avowed rejection of the Hegelian tradition. There is another option: that sin and unrighteousness is the full responsibility of those who commit it, and that our unjustifiable suffering is the consequence of human free choice wrongly exercised. But this is questionable as any kind of defence when the suffering incurred is still held to be unjustifiable, and when we deal with a pre-human humanity, unfree and transient. Anyway, as we shall see in The Trinity and The Kingdom of God, Moltmann breaks the connection between sin and suffering, though even with this move, God is ultimately responsible for permitting such a state of affairs to come into existence. Still, there is a tendency in Moltmann to think of evil as afflicting humanity because of some primal unrighteousness. This position too is problematic, when God is wholly good, and knowing the potential for such suffering is also in a real sense the responsibility of God; and if some suffering is unjustifiable, then God is (at least conventionally speaking), not wholly righteous.

There is another point to be noted. Moltmann claims that God as God is only revealed in his opposite, in the paradox of the cross; that God is revealed in what is normally understood as not being God-like, in humility, self-sacrifice, and death. And it is only because God is revealed in abandonment and crucifixion that he can be recognised as God by those abandoned by God. So the idea apparently is that it is only when the creation is characterised by God-forsakenness, conflict, and alienation, that God is revealed as the God who is wholly good, perfectly loving and just. The really interesting thing is not the contrast between an omnipotent God whom we would never expect to suffer, and a suffering God, rather the arguable underlying contradiction in a God who is perfectly righteous and wholly good, but who is revealed as such in that which pre-supposes, expresses, a god-forsaken world marked by unjustifiable suffering.

On a more sympathetic note, we could say that it hardly seems plausible that the suffering of Jesus is opposite to God in some fundamental way, and that this is surely not what Moltmann's thought implies. One assumes that the life of Jesus is what God is all about, in his love for the other. God is perhaps in his opposite in the sense that God's creative love is not from the beginning about wanting to be god-forsaken and in conflict with forces of exploitation and death arising from a collapsing world. God is suffering as all his creatures suffer, in degradation of being. What I mean is, God would not ever want there to be a world in which his Son is executed. Thus more than the simple contrast with an omnipotent apathetic God, there is the distinction between the overwhelming creativity and love of God's essential nature, and the love in the suffering in bearing what is contradictory to righteousness. But what is problematic about Moltmann's dialectic of revelation in the

opposite, is the intrinsic notion that the divine suffering is somehow essential, and has as its pre-supposition the possibility of unjustifiable creaturely suffering. The opposition between God and suffering here becomes a 'pseudo-opposition'. Moltmann's support for Schelling's statement that 'Everything can only be revealed in its opposite, love only in hatred, unity only in conflict,' means that God must reveal himself as God in the life of a suffering human being, finally god-forsaken. For this to be instantiated, requires there to be a god-forsaken world: in what other kind of world would the Son of God be put to death, and die god-forsaken? This is a world then in contradiction to God's righteousness, into which he comes to reveal himself as God. It may be that the world has fallen, or that it is evolving in creative risk. Surely though it cannot be necessarily god-forsaken? Yet in so much of Moltmann's theology this idea of god-forsakenness or absence of God in the world, and an emphasis on the retroactive power of the future, is a key-note. In fact I will conclude that there is an inevitability about the fate of the present world in his thought, which stems from alarming deficiencies or features in creation, and that this is something for which divine responsibility cannot be disclaimed. This is the crucial point for a discussion of Moltmann's theology in relation to the question of evil. If there is a strong case for divine responsibility, then Moltmann is clearly under an obligation to justify this suffering openly. For if it cannot be justified, then his theology is in the grip of a terrifying dialectic. On the other hand though, even if we could not point to characteristics of creation and the creative process which made suffering arguably inevitable, the very fact that as his theologising progresses, Moltmann is more and more unwilling to countenance theodicy and open to the reality of unjustifiable suffering, still makes his position on God's perfect goodness an untenable one.

Having said something about the general principles of "dialectic", Moltmann proceeds to discuss the "Resistance of the Cross Against its Interpretations" The "dialectic" is developed in the theme of the "profane horror and godlessness of the cross". The cross was repugnant to antiquity's sensibilities: crucified Jesus went against ideas of the aesthetic symbol in the quest for the good and the divine. Goethe too, was unable to reconcile the stark cross with humanity and reason, and offended by Hegel's image of reason as the "rose in the cross of the present" (Moltmann referring to K Löwith: From Hegel to Nietzsche 1965 - p14-29).

However, the cross can no longer be disguised. In its light Nietzsche conceived the re-evaluation of all values.⁷ And indeed, Christianity must "conquer its own forms" (CG p36). The origin of Christianity is a liberating circumstance which goes against all that has been humanly conceived as 'God'. The cross differentiates Christian faith from human projection. It crucifies "religion" and in so doing, according to Moltmann, is beyond "modern criticism of religion", standing apart from the arguments of theism and atheism (CG p37). Indeed, reflecting the necessity for a new creation:

"Faith in the cross distinguishes Christian faith from the world of religions and from secular ideologies and utopias, insofar as they seek to replace these religions or to inherit their legacy and bring them to realization." (CG p38)

The theological situation so far can be summed up as follows. The faith coming from the cross brings about a painful demonstration of truth "in the midst of untruth". The cross points out of the church, but it also calls the oppressed into the church and fellowship with Christ. There is emphasis of the "contradictory" dimension of Christian faith. In it one can "abandon one's previous identity as known to others, and gain the

identity of Christ in faith; become anonymous and unknown in one's environment and obtain citizenship in the new creation of God" (CG p40). As yet Moltmann is not describing the conception of the new creation other than as something contradicting features of the present. Nor have any of the implications of the crucifixion for a developed theology of the cross and image of God been drawn. That does not come for some while. His next stage is to sketch ways in which the radical once and for all scandal of the cross has been handled in the tradition (CG p41ff).

The treatment of the cult of the cross mirrors concerns with epiphany faith in the Theology of Hope. It is directed towards the sacrifice of the mass - "unbloody" repetition of the events on Golgotha. Perhaps more significantly, in the mysticism of the cross, Christ crucified was viewed as the "exemplary path" trodden by the righteous man (ibid). The importance of this mysticism of the cross is indicated in its presence in the theologies of the suffering. To the peasants of Europe and Latin America, and the Southern slaves: "Jesus was their identity with God in a world which had taken all hope from them and destroyed their human identity until it was unrecognisable" (CG p48). Christianity is here the opium of the people in the original sense.

We now come to an arguably false dichotomy. The sufferings of Christ are not from nature or fate (CG p51). They come "from his actions, from his preaching of the imminence of the kingdom as the kingdom of unconditional grace" (ibid). He was not a heroic failure, but claimed that God was "on the side of the godless". His is active suffering:

"Consequently, his sufferings and death are the messianic sufferings and death of the 'Christ of God.' His death is the death of the one who redeems men from death, which is evil. In other words, they are the pains of love for abandoned men..." (ibid)

I think the question then arises, 'why are we abandoned?' And does the fact that we and our world are abandoned, flawed and viciously transient, really not have anything significant to do with Jesus' experience of life and death on the planet earth? We in fact find that Jesus seems to suffer the fate of creation, if to an exemplary degree. His suffering is not only the ethical suffering of love. He was "most completely of all abandoned by his Father" (CG p63). Nevertheless, his love as the preaching of the imminence of the kingdom was able to go out to the other, to be suffering love. For Moltmann this means that Christian faith goes beyond private concerns and out into the world: "It changes the world, in so far as it [the world] puts life into a static situation... and [it, ie. faith] overcomes the death urge which turns everything into a possession or an instrument of power". Surely though this reflects the importance of the state of the world as deficient, in the life and death of Christ. It may be that going out to the 'other' is something positive and world-affirming in that it involves going out into "the domains of economic, social and political life in which men in fact have to carry out their struggle for 'existence'" (CG p63). Yet it is to be remembered that this struggle has as its context the world of the Moltmannian notion of the 'death urge', a flawed creation. The power of suffering love is not in itself sufficient, because of the need to recognise the rejection of Jesus by the Father. What are the perceived implications of this rejection: "... it leads beyond... into metaphysics... into the universal cosmic eschatology of the end, into the abandonment by God of the godless and the destruction of all that exists" (CG p64). It is difficult to interpret this statement in a constructive way.

Moltmann makes four distinctions in talk of theology of the cross. They cover: [a] "The apostolic cross of the establishment of the obedience of faith in a world full of idols..." : [b] The martyr's cross, bearing "bodily witness" to Christ's lordship: [c] Suffering love for abandoned humanity: [d] "The 'sufferings of this age', the groaning of the enslaved creation, the apocalyptic sorrow of the godless world" (CG p65). With these categories a Christian is to give a theoretical and practical articulation of what the cross means. Where theodicy is concerned, the implications of (c) and (d) are particularly interesting.

Theology has knowledge of God in the crucified Christ as its criterion. Moltmann raises the question of a (hypothetical?) theology which is 'scientific' in the sense of appealing to Hegel, Schleiermacher and Rothe (ibid). Hegel's thinking fulfills the need for Rothe-type theology to present a true philosophy, an account of the present time. Hegel maintained that only the real was the rational (a statement of course much discussed), and Moltmann pursues this along the line that Christianity in terms of world history is then only possible:

"... when what is real is Christian. But what is 'real'? And even if this theory were ever to prevail, its price would have to be paid; that of ignoring the 'dialectic of Enlightenment' (M. Horkheimer, T. Adorno) in the modern world, the misery of the modern age characterized by the names of Auschwitz and Hiroshima..." (CG p68: in saying this, Moltmann is arguably in danger of throwing the baby out with the bath water, to put it crudely. Creation is a whole, however much we may dislike and be hurt by some of its parts and possibilities. If we cannot accept the world as a developing whole in some important sense, then we may be lead to ask, is there nothing real which is Christian?)

In contrast to this, in the light of the cross, theology can never be pure theory of God, only a critical theory (CG p69). The God of the cross contradicts the God of law, the gods revered in a political religion, and the God revealed in creation and history. Theology of the cross can "only be polemical, dialectical, antithetical and critical

theory... It is also crucifying theology, and is thereby liberating theology" (ibid). Luther's theology of the cross was an insight delivered against the *theologia gloriae* of the medieval church. It contrasted the God known through the cross, and that knowledge ascertained through creation and history. Man does still have indirect knowledge of God, but this is fundamentally distorted for purposes of self-deification (CG p71). Here at last one has something on human will and decision which could perhaps remove some of the difficulties over the absence of a free will defence. But it is taken no further.

I will give a brief account of the main thrusts in the three chapters preceding "The Crucified God": "Questions About Jesus": "The Historical Trial of Jesus": and "The Eschatological Trial of Jesus".

"Questions About Jesus" starts with the basic assertion that Jesus is the core of Christian faith (CG p82ff). Questions about Jesus arise in the context of debate between Christians, and with non-Christians, humanists for instance. With the acknowledgement of Jesus as the central confession of faith, the question of how one reaches that stage is pivotal (CG p84).

The first of Moltmann's questions about Jesus is "Is Jesus True God?" The nature of finite existence has given rise to thought about an intransient and eternal mode of being (CG p87ff). When Nicaea asked if God was revealed in Jesus, it thought in terms of a problematic incarnation of the eternal in the finite. Moltmann goes on to note how post-Kantian German idealism gave christology a speculative slant: the idea of God's self-revelation in man. So that: "If man really thinks of God, then God is thinking of himself in man... If Christ knows himself as

the Son of God, then God must know himself in him" (CG p90). Fichte and Hegel were determinative for this tradition, it is noted, Schelling also. Moltmann dwells on Hegel. He comprehended Jesus in the context of the "whole", of the self-emptying of God into the alien, and of the return (Hegel: "The Kingdom of the Son" in "The Christian Religion", Philosophy of Religion, Vol III, Routledge Kegan Paul 1968). Hegel, we are reminded, thought the "death of God" crucial to the divine subjectivity.

However Moltmann criticises speculative christology for rendering the historical particulars of the historical Jesus and "the arbitrary occurrences of his life inessential" (CG p91). Thinking about Jesus' history in terms of God's self-realisation will sublimate the historical, as it occurred, in the apprehension of the historical necessity of spirit (CG p92). Here we have another firm disavowal of the Hegelian tradition. Further: "In the crucified Jesus... there remains something which still resists its sublimation into the concept of atonement. Only a new creation which is based upon the crucified Christ can sublimate the scandal of his cross into a pure hymn of praise" (ibid). This is a juxtaposition of suffering which cannot be fitted into a concept of atonement, which cannot be seen in the context of the historical necessities of spirit - with a future which somehow mysteriously 'sublimates' the suffering of the past. In other places, where Moltmann attacks theodicy, such a concept of sublimation in the presence of 'omega' seems impossible (e.g. TKG p47). What causes confusion is the idea of sublimation in a supposedly non-Hegelian, and non-justificatory theology. What cannot be suppressed is the fact that many will require that a theology such as Moltmann's do something more than merely contemplate the paradoxical future sublimation of unjustifiable agonies.

These are experiences which will, whilst held to be unjustifiable, perennially threaten to render the existence of a wholly good God incompatible with the history of creation. The co-suffering of Jesus cannot in itself prevent this.

There is a second christological question: "Is Jesus True Man?" Its relevance to the topic of theodicy lies in the way in which Jesus as the righteous man is placed outwith our history. To be human is to be no longer at the behest of nature. The traditional situation is reversed. Our future and that of the world will be decided by nuclear weapons, revolution, the fate of nature. Moltmann says of humanity: "his main problem is no longer the universal finitude which he experiences in solidarity with all other creatures, but the humanity of his own world" (CG p92). I would argue that the two things are intimately related.

Present day christology's questions on the extent to which Jesus can be called God, hinge on the search for a model of identity, authentic life, "true humanity". In that case Jesus is viewed as "man of God" rather than as "God-man", which is a move to the existential problem, and a shift away from the cosmological/ontological salvation concerns. Ethics replaces metaphysics, and Moltmann believes, that post-Kant, Schleiermacher's discussion of feeling has left many with a soteriology of the empowered God consciousness (CG p95). This he holds, is inadequate. Neither can existential faith deal productively with cross or resurrection. To such faith resurrection is "mythologoumenon" and the cross is "life consummation".

In reality: "... in the light of his preceding life, no adequate interpretation of his death on the cross can be found... [for] the

crucified Christ... is outside history, outside society, and outside the humanity of living men" (CG p97-8). On page one hundred and twenty-two one also finds it said that: "... no continuities in the field of history, the philosophy of history, the history of language or the history of existential life can bridge the discontinuity which lies in his death" (CG p122). This, I think, concerns not only Jesus, but is a reflection of the abyssal discontinuity between the fate of the righteous person in this creation, and that existence which would be lived by them in the environment and wholeness which is the true home and state of such being (as in the new creation). There is thus in Moltmann's theology a very real sense in which any loving and righteous being, whole and free from the distorted self images generated in this world, can be seen from the start as "outside the humanity of living men", and outside of the world in which they must live.

Moltmann holds that the Easter faith is the option of refutation of the refutation of the life lived and proclaimed by Jesus. The preaching of Easter is directed against death, and to the proclamation that he is risen. Significantly: "The purpose of this claim is not merely to achieve a new understanding of oneself but at a more profound level, to bring new being out of non-being" (CG p123).

The rest of the chapter outlines the way to the cross, the history of Jesus's life of conflict, conflict between "God and the gods". His preaching had crucifixion as a necessary consequence. Characteristically, Moltmann wants to avoid imputing an absolute necessity to this conflict and its fatal result.² There was a degree of "historical chance" in his trial (CG p133). Yet, "his conflict with the law displays a certain intrinsic necessity which was bound to lead to his rejection and cursing

as a 'blasphemer'" (ibid). This feature is taken up in the Easter faith which articulates a theological trial in terms of righteousness of works versus righteousness of faith, justification of the godless against that of the righteous.

The chapter ends with a discussion of Jesus as the god-forsaken, emphasising some earlier points. The gospel of Mark, contrasting with Luke and John has Jesus die with a confused cry and in nothing like a sense of victory or as an "exemplary martyr" (CG p147). Jesus's death is again to be seen as one with indications of a "profound abandonment" by God (CG p147). Indeed:

"... for Jesus, according to his whole preaching, the cause for which he lived and worked was so closely linked with his own person and life that his death was bound to mean the death of his cause... Just as there was a unique fellowship with God in his life and preaching, so in his death there was a unique abandonment by God." (CG p149)

The christological question as to whom Jesus is is centred on the question of "what took place between Jesus and his God, between that 'Father' and Jesus, in what was given expression in his preaching and his actions and was literally 'put to death' in his abandonment as he died" (CG p149). In his emphasis on the cry from Psalm 22, Moltmann argues that God is set against God (CG p152 esp). Psalm 22 can be seen as a legal plea, but if one looks to the unique relationship of Jesus to his Father, these words become a cry which puts at stake the deity of God. Jesus puts not just his personal existence, but his theological existence in question. Moltmann gives a deliberately [i.e. openly] exaggerated form: "My God, why hast thou forsaken *thyself*" (CG p151). Here we have "stasis" within God (CG p152), "God against God", even theological trial between God and God (ibid). This rejection of Jesus is thus central, more so than the fact that he died a blasphemer and a rebel. For : "... finally, and most profoundly, he died as one rejected by his God and his

Father. In the theological context of his life this is the most important dimension" (ibid). Moltmann continues by arguing that it may be that he was misunderstood by the Romans, but by God? In that case Jesus is a liar or God not God. So, as a consequence of real rejection: "The cross of the son divides God from God to the utmost degree of enmity and distinction" (ibid).

Subsequently there comes the uniting that follows from the resurrection. In the context of the events following the abandonment of Jesus in an abandoned world, faith reads the cross in terms of a universal eschatological hope; in the light of the resurrection, regarded not as some solitary miracle, but as the prelude to a general raising of the dead. (CG p162-3) Indeed

"'Easter' was a prelude to, and a real anticipation of, God's qualitatively new future and the new creation in the midst of the world's suffering. So in the light of this prelude to the coming God and the coming end of this abandoned world it was also necessary to recall, understand and proclaim in eschatological terms the one who presented this prelude, Jesus of Nazareth." (CG p163)

"... the Easter hope shines not only forwards into the unknown newness of the history which it opens up, but also backwards over the graveyards of history, and in their midst first on the grave of a crucified man who appeared in that prelude" (CG p163). There is thus hope for history and the god-forsaken.

Moltmann refers to W Benjamin's ninth thesis on history, arguing that: "This view comes very near to being an eschatological theology of the crucified Christ, if it is in a position to unfold hope and liberation in the history of the suffering of the world from the history of the suffering of the risen Christ" (CG p165). He does not quote it, but I think it worth doing so:

"A Klee painting named '*Angelus Novus*' shows an angel looking as

though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned towards the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. This storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress." (W Benjamin, Illuminations, Fontana, 1982 p260ff)

For Benjamin, says Moltmann: "history is fundamentally a history of suffering, it cannot itself become pregnant with a messianic future". Moltmann then remarks of Benjamin: "The messianic history of life runs counter to the history of the suffering of the world which leads to death, and approaches it from the future..." (ibid). So, and it is said with approval: "... the reversed 'eschatological reading of history' is not so alien among the general problems of universal history-writing as positivists might think" (ibid). However Moltmann doesn't explore the implications of the fact that such a reversed reading of history has as its pre-supposition a present destitute of meaning. To theodictists and atheist anti-theodictists this is dangerous and provocative. It is an aspect of Moltmann's thinking which sits uncomfortably with a positive doctrine of creation.

Meanwhile, referring to the Johannine theme of the glorification of Jesus on the cross, Moltmann thinks one can talk of the movement: "the transcendent God immanent in Jesus, and conversely the immanent Jesus transcended in God" (CG p169). The immanent, or that reality in which the transcendent became immanent, appears to come off worst here. What of the importance of transcendence for us? Anticipatory vision in the coming future of God is the structure in which the resurrection of Jesus can be spoken of as the "symbol for the 'end of history', of unrighteousness,

evil, death and abandonment by God..." (ibid). Nevertheless, why was humanity god-forsaken? Why given over to death and suffering? More questions, important ones. Perhaps an answer lies in the following passages, where Moltmann talks about death, resurrection, and theodicy.

In talking of the nature of the resurrection of Jesus, he makes it clear that there can be no resurrection into a mortal life - "this life which leads to death" (CG p169). For: "the proclamation of the Easter witnesses that God has 'raised' this dead Jesus 'from the dead' amounts to nothing less than the claim that this future of the new world of righteousness has already dawned in this one person in the midst of our history of death" (CG p171). Additionally, in contrast to Jewish talk of the resurrection "*of the dead*", the Easter faith speaks of the resurrection of this one man "*from the dead*" (Moltmann's emphasis). The difference being that:

"In that one man the future of the new world has already gained power over this unredeemed world of death and has condemned it to become a world that passes away ... Thus the 'night' of false life and unrighteousness and the 'unredeemed world' is 'far spent'... we find expressed here a new eschatological understanding of time ... Without... this, all the things that the Christian church claims and proclaims as being present: the forgiveness of sins, reconciliation and discipleship in love, are fundamentally impossible." (CG p171)

But if these things are genuinely impossible without the new creation, were they ever possible without it? Perhaps there was a time when the world was fresh, and far from spent, and nobody died, and there was discipleship in love, and real hope that it would always be thus. Though apart from the good biological arguments against immortality, even if Moltmann wishes to invoke special creation, there are moral ones too, which I shall be looking at (based on opposition to the idea that universal mortality following sin is a moral possibility in a world created by a wholly loving God). It is also to be recognised that

Moltmann envisages sorrow and suffering in the new creation (GC p231). It is not surprising then that with what makes for sorrow and suffering in the future apparently already with us (or is there to be a new kind of suffering - hopefully justifiable), combined with mortality and the 'death urge', we find our world a 'night of false life'.

In Moltmann's terms, there is "scandal" in the difference between this unredeemed reality and that new creation which is to come. In the light of this "scandal", he gives a fresh formulation of the theodicy question:

"Any look at world history raises the question why in-human men fare so well and their victims fare so badly. Only on a superficial level is 'world history' a problem of universal history, by the solution of which a meaningful horizon can be found for the whole of existence. At the deepest level the question of world history is the question of righteousness... If the question of theodicy can be understood as a question of the righteousness of God in the history of the suffering of the world, then all understanding and presentation of world history must be seen within the horizon of the question of theodicy." (CG p 175)

Here Moltmann's theodicy question seems to be that of conventional theodicy debate. It is the question 'why?' It has its ground in the nature of God's righteousness and the need to reconcile the suffering of the world with this righteousness. Moltmann now turns to look at Daniel's apocalyptic hope. How did Daniel see God's righteousness prevailing? (CG. p174ff) Moltmann views his apocalyptic hope as distant from human concern for eternal life, or the need for a soteriological symbol. Rather, it is centred on the concept of God's righteousness. In order that the righteous and the unrighteous can be judged, God will make them alive. So, what motivates Daniel, Moltmann argues, is the understanding that death does not limit God's righteousness, rather than an anthropocentric hope for resurrection into new life. But, so we ask, are people not right to expect something? Indeed Moltmann goes on to say:

"Now if the future is taken to heart in the question of righteousness, then God's righteousness is put in question by the death of the innocent and also by the death of the unrighteous. Does

death then set a limit to the righteousness of God? In view of the belief in the divinity of God this is inconceivable. Daniel 12.2 is therefore the first to answer this..." (CG p174: Daniel 12:2 - "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt")

Daniel, as Moltmann notes, thinks of eternal life for some, but eternal damnation for others. The reason for looking at Moltmann's discussion here, is that the fact that people die, and that death is incompatible with God's righteousness does not generate the slightest unease. This would be more understandable if God were liberating the territory of some other God who thought of death as say a character-building feature of existence: but since God created the world, only he could have set such an apparently drastic and inexplicable limit to his righteousness.

Because of those who were gassed, murdered oppressed, Moltmann sees a speculative question as to whether God exists - "Or do the executioners ultimately triumph over their innocent victims" (CG p175). It is stated: "... only where the new man is born who is neither oppressed nor oppresses others, can one speak of the true revolution of righteousness and of the righteousness of God" (CG 178). I believe that in these terms, this (new) being has only existed in Christ, and will only come to be true for us in the new creation. This still leaves one with the moral problem of 'pre-history', with its 'death-urges', power compulsions, and struggle to survive. The speculative question remains. But implicit in Moltmann's formulation here is the view that if God does exist, then the new creation ushered in by this God will wipe away the normal implications of the unjustifiable execution of innocent victims. The conventional question is thus by-passed. There is no way in which the speculative question becomes more than that of the wait for eschatological verification that God exists, whatever way the theodicy debate goes.

The theodicy question is reformulated, this time as the "phenomenon of the 'delay of the parousia'" (CG p184). If the risen Christ is indeed the crucified Christ, why was there not a general resurrection of the dead? (one also asks why there are any dead at all if God is wholly good, and so opposed to death? It seems remarkable that the origins of something as apparently fundamental to organic existence as the ageing process is ascribed to primal transgression of ethical codes - resulting in possibly unjustifiable suffering). Moltmann's answers are somewhat vague and unsatisfactory. The cross and resurrection are the basis for the anticipatory hopes of the suffering, dying, oppressed. That is: "His prolepsis forms the basis of his pro-existence and in it becomes significant for us" (CG 184). The one who was raised took our place and died, only in this is there saving significance: "In the crucified Jesus the 'end of history' is present in the relationships of history. Therefore in him can be found reconciliation in the midst of strife and hope for the overcoming of strife" (CG p185).

What can be said of God in the light of the resurrection of the crucified Christ? Moltmann understands that the Jewish Christians saw the 'subject' of the raising of Jesus as God, and the 'object' as Jesus. The resurrection was taken as being 'at last' the revelation of who God was. Paul (Rom. 8.11) speaks of God as the one who has raised Jesus from the dead: "This means that God has finally, in the end-time, defined himself through the resurrection of Jesus as *the God who raises the dead*" (CG p188). This, a new eschatological definition of God relativises all others (ibid). Creation, we are told, has been "made obsolete by human sin" and the resurrection of the dead is a sign of the new creation now beginning.

The action of God in raising Jesus is, as a historical liberating event, comparable to the bringing out of Egypt. It brings Jesus freedom from death's tyranny. The distinction between Exodus and Easter resurrection is that: "the resurrection of a dead man falls outside the framework of history, which is dominated by death and men's dying" (CG p189).

In what way is the crucifixion to be understood as God's action, and even God's suffering? Under the Pauline headings of sending and giving Moltmann outlines the implications of the fact that Jesus was sent and delivered up, made sin for humanity (CG p191-2). The resurrection is the constitution of Jesus as Son of God, but in the talk of sending it is also understood that God: "represents and reveals himself in the surrender of Jesus and in his passion and death on the cross... [in so-doing]... he also identifies and defines himself" (CGp192). The basic understanding of the theology of the cross which Moltmann has so far established is summarised in this passage which expositis Paul, but which like so much Moltmannian exposition is at the same time a position statement. Given that the righteous and wholly good God has freely created this world *ex nihilo*, some obscurities remain:

"In the action of the Father in delivering up his Son to suffering and to a godless death, God is acting in himself. He is acting in himself in this manner of suffering and dying in order to open up in himself life and freedom for sinners. Creation, new creation and resurrection are external works of God against chaos, nothingness and death... God overcomes himself, God passes judgement on himself... He assigns to himself the fate that by rights men should endure.'The cross of Jesus, understood as the cross of the Son of God, therefore reveals a change in God, a stasis within the God-head: 'God is other'. And this event in God is the event on the cross. It takes on Christian form in the simple formula which contradicts all possible metaphysical and historical ideas of God: 'God is love'." (CG p193)3

So, ideas of God are changed in the cross (CG p195). God's freedom comes to us through this suffering on the cross, contradicting the god's and powers which crucified Jesus.

In the key chapter "The Crucified God" (CG p200ff), the question about Jesus is the question about God (CG p201). Theology of the death of God has focussed attention on doing theology (famously) "within earshot of the dying cry of Jesus" (ibid). Moltmann sketches approaches to the cross and God's suffering by various theologians, including Rahner, Küng, Barth and Jüngel (CG p201-3). Most significant for his own approach in the long term, is the argument that a trinitarian dimension is essential if theopaschite thinking is not to collapse in on itself. The trinitarian emphasis avoids the paradox of a simple God both dead, and not dead (This issue is dealt with more fully in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God). It is held that "the more one understands the whole event of the cross as an event of God, the more any simple concept of God falls apart" (CG p204).

Within a few pages, it is stated that: "In the cross of his Son, God took upon himself not only death, so that man might be able to die comforted with the certainty that even death could not separate him from God, but still more, in order to make the crucified Christ the ground of his new creation, in which death itself is swallowed up in the victory of life and there will be 'no sorrow, no crying, and no more tears'" (CG p217). Whilst this is compatible with a non-dialectical theology, there is a sense in which, in the passage below, suffering appears as part of what God is about. However, the exact nature of the process, as it seems, remains unclear:

"God's incarnation 'even unto the death on the cross' is not in the last resort a matter of concealment; this is his utter humiliation, in which he is completely with himself and completely with the other, the man who is de-humanized. Humiliation to the point of death on the cross corresponds to God's nature in the contradiction of abandonment... God is not greater than he is in this humiliation... God is not more divine than he is in this humanity." (CG p205)

Again though, given the pre-supposition of intense human suffering, the

question of responsibility, justice, and goodness, cannot be put to one side.

To continue, the theology of the cross is able to say that despite seeing all things as subject "to transitoriness and nothingness" (CG p218), it has the dimension of hope grounded in the resurrection of the crucified Christ. Indeed: "'... the creation was subjected to nothingness, not of its own will but of the will of him who subjected it in hope'. Rom. 8.20" (ibid). This is set in the context of the idea of the history of God, developed later in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God. The cosmos exists in the "eschatological history of God" (ibid). The world is to be understood in this history rather than vice versa. New possibilities rise from God's possibilities, and this history of God is the horizon of this world, for "the world is not to be thought of as the horizon of his history" (CG p219). It is in this way that: "The event of the resurrection of the crucified Christ makes it necessary to think of the annihilation of the world and the creation of every being from nothing" (CG p218). It appears that Jesus is crucified by a suffering world, whose end is confirmed by the resurrection of this man into a world which is not the kind of world to crucify sons of God. So Jesus is raised into new possibilities out of a world with none, at least so far as compatibility with God's righteousness is concerned. This seems unsatisfactory.

What of problems over the changeability of God in such a dynamic history? Moltmann feels that the distinction between our passive changeability and the divine being does not rule out God's changing of himself, by his free will. God can be thought of as open to suffering, though not in the way that creatures are, in their being: "... exposed to illness, pain and death" (CG p230). God can suffer in his love, that is, from fulness of

being, as opposed to any deficiency, and is open for active suffering, the potential for which is equated with the ability to truly love. Critically, one can link this to the notion that God's love is also opposed to unnecessary suffering, if there is to be any suffering at all. Thus there should be some limitations on how far we could assert that God loves victims, and does so as an expression of his divine love. For instance, if we maintain that all the helpless people who die premature deaths of all kinds suffer in a way which can never be justified, but say that God loves them all, then we may have reduced the notion of love to vacuity. Or it may be that God does not love until his own son has suffered. If suffering is equated with capacity for love, then this is significant when it comes to his understanding of the alien. For instance: "... active suffering, the suffering of love, in which one voluntarily opens himself to being affected by the another" (ibid). And: "If love is the acceptance of the other without regard to one's own well-being, then it contains within itself the possibility of sharing in suffering and freedom to suffer as a result of the otherness of the other" (ibid). So, as I see it, it is possible for the theodist or atheist to say that for Moltmann, God is suffering out of his fullness of being, affected by the multitudes of 'others' suffering from inadequacy of being. The cross is the high point of this suffering out of fullness of being: though it seems so evidently a response to a problem created from this same fullness. Here we have the problem of non-being, which has to be overcome by God himself - the God who creates the freedom to suffer:

"Only if all disaster, forsakenness by God, absolute death, the infinite curse of damnation and sinking into nothingness is in God himself, is community with this God eternal salvation, infinite joy, indestructible election and divine life." (CG p246)

Moltmann's line on the nature of the negatives as plainly and irredeemably evil, is further obscured when he deals with the role of the

via negativa in conceiving of the life of the new being. If it has been said that the potential to suffer is a freedom to suffer, then it is not necessarily the case that God wants us to suffer, merely that love implies a freedom to suffer with the other. However, it is now said that: "if change, mortality and corruption are experienced as disaster and misery..." (CG p230), salvation understood as the negation of this world, as incorruptibility and immortality, is also perhaps "terrifying and boring." In fact the negation of the negative does not provide a positive that arises somehow magically. Moltmann rejects the idea that the negation is contoured to the negative. It is argued that the objectives of salvation in the *via negativa* tradition "negate the relative goodness of creation and the transitory and mortal happiness of this life" (ibid). The wholly other is identifiable with 'final corruption' (CG p231). But is death not wholly other from the creative being of God? For Moltmann it is, and it is suprising to see that immortality is described as potentially boring. Sorrowful finitude followed by infinite boredom would be unjust by any standards.

He wants to move beyond distinctions between God and man, God and the world: "We become true men in the community of the incarnate, the suffering and loving, the human God" (CG p231). On a different level though, his soteriological definition gives implicit recognition of a clear difference, ontologically, between suffering mortal life as dehumanised human beings (even if hoping), and status as true men. Albeit that this latter existence, which negates the negation in a very real sense (contradicting what has gone before), does not find a home in 'Greek' intransience:

"This salvation, too, is outwardly permanent and immortal in the humanity of God, but in itself it is a new life full of inner movement, with suffering and joy, love and pain, taking and giving; it is changeableness in the sense of life to its highest possible

degree." (CG p231)

Whereas some theologians might hope for a new life without suffering and pain, Moltmann brings this phenomenon into post-mortem existence. This multiplies questions as to why, where pain and suffering are integral to a reality where there is 'no more sorrow, no more crying, no more tears', it was previously necessary to combine these aspects of whole being with absolute death, when they could be had authentically and for ever in the creation which truly expresses God's righteousness?

How, in the context of such questions of righteousness, is the passion narrative terminology of delivering up/handing-over/betraying (*paradidonai*) understood? In the Pauline approach, justification follows from the handing over of the Son to godforsakenness. References are to Romans 8.31f, II Corinthians 5.21 - 'He made him sin for us', and Galatians 3.13 - 'He became a curse for us.' So "It may therefore be said that the Father delivers up his Son on the cross in order to be the Father of those who are delivered up" (*ibid*). For the Son is delivered up so that he may become lord of the living and the dead. In this event, the Father is suffering "the infinite grief of love." This grief is of importance equal to the death of the Son.

The Father suffers, but he does not die. The Son dies, but it cannot be said that God dies. The death of the Son is the death of the Father's Fatherhood; the Son experiences Fatherlessness. Also, in Galatians 2.20, as in the synoptic tradition, the Son gives himself up (CG p243). Jesus does not submit to fate, but faces the path of the cross. This expresses a "deep community of will between Jesus and his God and Father... If both historical god-forsakenness and eschatological surrender can be seen... then this event contains community between Jesus and his

Father in separation and separation in community" (CG p244). Paul understands godforsakenness as surrender, and surrender as love (ref. to Rom 8.32, Gal. 2.20). In fact, John 3.16, and 4.16 ('God is love') signify that the existence of God is constituted in his love. The love of the event of the cross includes not only this identity of substance and will, but also the inequality and suffering of the cross. They are separated most deeply, yet "are most inwardly one in their surrender" (ibid).

It seems as if Moltmann says that in the triune event of the cross, the very god-forsakenness of Jesus is also the essence of God's experiencing real Fatherhood, and is experienced by, accessible to Jesus as such an ultimate positive. The language here is of course complex. Yet on a fundamental level, how is something portrayed as absolute and profound absence of relationship to be experienced as anything other than *total* absence of relationship? It could be said that as where the allied war-time agent is necessarily relinquished into the hands of the enemy, to certain torture and death, understanding the anguish of the colleague, and knowing that the colleague knows this, there is both utter abandonment to annihilation, and community. It could then be argued that the death of Jesus as an event in the 'history of God' is less shocking than that of those innocents who died slowly and obscurely in the great Chinese famine of 1877-8. In The Crucified God the nobility of God is in surrendering in Jesus to sorrowful abandonment by the Father. Genuine abandonment, willingly accepted. Is there not something different and less scandalous here (arguably not more so) than in the death of a village, the decimation of a province: the premature death of profoundly contingent, to Moltmann's eyes, already viciously transient beings? In their deaths utterly god-forsaken, and without a profound community of

spirit with the Father. And whilst we may say that the Father enjoys a relationship with the Son of a kind deeper than that had with all other human beings, this also carries the implication that other human beings are all the less responsible for the brokenness of their lives, given the god-forsakenness of generation after generation, and the destructive characteristics of the world, time out of mind.

What of the 'history of God'?

"All human history, however much it may be determined by guilt and death, is taken up into this 'history of God', ie. into the Trinity, and integrated into the future of the 'history of God'." (CG p246)

The term 'history of God' (it is noted) is Hegel's. This history "... contains within itself the whole abyss of godforsakenness, absolute death and the non-God" (ibid). However, there is no death which cannot be seen as having been God's death "in the history on Golgotha" (ibid). Additionally, in placing the cross at the centre for our understanding of God, we are to think God not as nature, person, authority, but as 'event'. It is from the love and grief of Golgotha that the Spirit is derived. One can pray 'in' this event (of Easter), and on its basis God is to be spoken of as differentiated. In this event the believer experiences something new: "By the death of the Son he is taken up into the grief of the Father and experiences a liberation which is a new element in this de-divinized and legalistic world, which is itself even a new element over against the original creation of the world" (CG p249). We thus participate in trinitarian history, insofar as this is determinative for history. And it does seem so:

"The Trinity, understood as an event for history, therefore presses towards eschatological consummation, so that the 'Trinity may be all in all', or put more simply, so that 'love may be all in all', so that life may triumph over death and righteousness over the hells of the negative and of all force... He [God] is, if one is prepared to put it in inadequate imagery, transcendent as Father, immanent as Son and opens up the future of history as the spirit... Beyond theistic submissiveness and atheistic protest this is the history of life,

because it is the history of love." (CG p256)

Moltmann attacks thinking which wishes a return to some original perfection (CG p261). The identification of kingdom with creation is questioned. And does the history of creation not have an effect on its state at consummation? To deny this, says Moltmann, would be to tend towards an un-historical conception of things. Moreover: "Can it really be said of the first creation that in it God was 'all in all'?" (ibid)

He then raises a classic question of the problem of evil: if grace were only to make things good again, without making sin an impossibility, we should wonder when to expect the next fall (ibid). The new creation will have added something to existence. Indeed: "the new freedom of the children of God must be greater than the first freedom of men" (ibid).

The seeming indirect appropriation, through quotation, of key elements of Hegelianism, such as at the foot of page two-hundred and fifty-three of The Crucified God, gives a strong impression that here we see human love functioning within the wider and more important divine dialectic of the negative, its overcoming, and our subsequent sharing in this. Moltmann quotes the by now familiar passage from Hegel: "But the life of mind is not one that shuns death, and keeps clear of destruction; it endures death and in death maintains its being. It only wins to its truth when it finds itself utterly torn asunder... mind is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and dwelling with it. This dwelling beside it is the magic power that converts the negative into being" (op.cit., CG p253). Hegel used the image of Good Friday to describe the life of mind because in the death of God, love had killed death (CG p254). That is, Jesus 'sustains the contradiction', and achieves reconciliation (CG p254). Moltmann also gives one a quotation from the

Philosophy of Religion (111, 98), stating: "... the human, the finite, frailty, weakness, the negative, is itself a divine moment, is in God himself" (ibid). As usual, when Moltmann is confronting one with highly suggestive references to Hegel, there is little to indicate what is being agreed, or disagreed with, or if we are on a sight-seeing excursion into historical theology. Indeed, this passage ends with the tantalising remark that: "It remains for us to note that at the end of this section of the Philosophy of Religion Hegel expressly acknowledges the doctrine of the Trinity, because only this makes it possible to understand the cross as the 'history of God'" (ibid).

Trinitarian christology with its emphasis on the history of God has a definite form, and is a living history. The history of the sending of the Son; his delivering up; resurrection; the transference of rule; and the handing back of this rule to God the Father. And "Only with the handing over of rule to the Father is the obedience of the Son, and thus his Sonship consummated" (ibid). However, the events of the cross are not just an intervention on behalf of the future consummation. This "consummation already acquires its permanent form in his suffering love" (ibid). Here it appears that the suffering of the world, and of Christ cannot be optional. Looking at the world, death, and godless powers, the consummation can be seen as the outcome of a dialectic of some sort:

"... in respect of the inner relationship of the Son to Father, the consummation of the salvation of the world lies in the consummation of the history of God within the Trinity." (CG p266)

I leave exploration of this topic until discussion of The Trinity and The Kingdom of God.

The thought of Abraham Heschel is reviewed by Moltmann for its contribution to an understanding of the relational basis of God's

pathos.¹⁰ Nevertheless, this is done without any consistent attempt to develop an understanding of the theodicy problem: for instance where God's suffering unjustifiably under man's actions could be taken further, and with certain data, seen as a consequence of man's unjustifiable suffering under God's actions. In Heschel, The pathos of God is not some absolute quality of being, but a characteristic of his relationship with his people. It is based on God's freedom, and not on pure will. His being is 'transferred' into the history of his relationship to his people, for God "takes man so seriously that he suffers under the actions of man and can be injured by them. At the heart of the prophetic proclamation there stands the certainty that God is interested in the world to the point of suffering" (CG p271). Moltmann refers to rabbinic ideas of the self-humiliation of God at various stages of the Israel's history, and to E Wiesel's account of an execution in Auschwitz (CG p274: quoting from Night p75. London 1960). Three are hung, two men and a youth. After half an hour the youth alone remains alive, struggling. Someone asks, where is God now? Within himself, Wiesel hears a voice answer: "'Where is he? He is here. He is hanging there on the gallows...'" This, says Moltmann, is the answer which must be given if one is to avoid blasphemy (ibid).¹¹

Nevertheless, critics may inquire that if God is sharing in the pain and annihilation which he should have foreseen, and there can be no justifications for such suffering, why does one continue to talk of God as the righteous one? A commentator on Moltmann wrote of his words "'Resurrection, life and righteousness' come through the death of this one man in favour of those who have been delivered over to death through their unrighteousness" (CG p185):

"But the millions of Jews did not really 'qualify' as unrighteous, or for that matter, as righteous. They were just killed. And they were

killed because they were Jews... What does it mean to say to the Jew of Buchenwald or Bergen-Belsen that 'through his suffering and death, the risen Christ brings righteousness and life to the unrighteous and the dying'?" (A R Eckardt: JAAR 44 [1976] p685 - his emphasis)

Eckardt also makes a point when he reflects on the burning of Jewish children:

"... Jesus of Nazareth was at least a grown, mature man, and by all the evidence a courageous one. On the other hand, we now have a plethora of souls, and they are *children*. It may be suggested to Professor Moltmann that there is an evil in this world which is more terrible than every other evil... This is the evil of little children witnessing the murders of other little children, *while knowing that they are also to be murdered in the same way, being aware absolutely that they face the identical fate.*" (op.cit. p687: his emphasis)

Eckardt elaborates on the crucifixion, that "... this particular 'abomination of desolation' simply does not stand up as the absolute horror upon which Christian faith then can and should, dialectically, build its hope. I contend that in comparison with certain other sufferings, Jesus' death becomes non-decisive" (op.cit). Here I think, atheist anti-theodacists would perhaps turn to Moltmann, along with theodacists, and argue that where God creates a world of dazzling suffering, unjustifiable, and then enters into it (where Moltmann asserts that God's suffering has this within it, somehow morally surpasses, all other suffering), this is not enough. In fact, God's suffering is not outstanding if it is suffering endured by the creator of the world, stemming from the ontological deficiencies of the world. Ultimately Eckardt feels that in Moltmann's theology the cross stands as sign of simple 'unmitigated' evil in the world.

Moltmann argues that "When God becomes man in Jesus of Nazareth, he not only enters into the finitude of man, but in his death on the cross also enters into the situation of man's godforsakenness". Also that: "In Jesus he does not die the natural death of a finite being, but the violent death of the criminal on the cross, the death of complete

abandonment by God" (CG p276). But natural death is evil, and a sign of god-forsakenness in Moltmann's theology. Is violent death not a feature of transient existence; one which, wrong, is not entirely unforeseeable in the world God has freely chosen to create? Death (as we will continue to see) is a great problem in Moltmann's theology. Indeed: "...only with the annihilation of death will the Son hand over the kingdom to the Father" (CG p278). Arguably, the overcoming of death coming about through the resurrection of a *criminal* loses its significance as the symbol of the wholly good God, in a world portrayed in terms of inherent meaninglessness, subject to the 'death urge' (see below). The emphasis on the resurrection of Jesus as the overcoming of death highlights the sense of ontological deficiency as the root of all the world's ills, and even as the cause of Jesus's death. In this way all people that on earth do dwell may be argued to be innocent victims of some divine incompetence.

There follows a passage in which the negative ("all that annihilates") appears as something of a dialectical moment. This would of course be of significance for a stance on theodicy:

"The human God who encounters man in the crucified Christ thus involves man in a realistic divinization (*theosis*). Therefore in communion with Christ it can truly be said that men live *in* God and *from* God, 'that they live, move and have their being in him' (Acts 17.28). Understood in pantheistic terms, that would be a dream which would have to ignore the negative element in the world. But a trinitarian theology of the cross perceives God in the negative element and therefore the negative element in God, and in this dialectical way is panentheistic. For in the hidden mode of humiliation to the point of the cross, all being and all that annihilates has already been taken up in God and God begins to become 'all in all'. To recognize the God in the cross of Christ, conversely means to recognize the cross, inextricable suffering, death and hopeless rejection in God... Even Auschwitz is taken up into the grief of the Father, the surrender of the Son and the power of the Spirit." (CG p276-7 : Moltmann's emphasis)

I think the sentence ending 'all in all' is the most indicative of dialectical thinking. However, the sentence following the last of the

passage above, continues: "That never means that Auschwitz and other grisly places can be justified, for it is the cross that is the beginning of the trinitarian history of God" (CG p278). If dialectic there is, it is not one which can answer the theodicy question satisfactorily. God is enduring unjustifiable death, and thus conquering it. Moltmann goes on in a way which again seems to underestimate the complexity of the issues at stake in the conventional theodicy problem:

"... only with the healing of those in despair who bear lifelong wounds, only with the abolition of all rule and authority, only with the annihilation of death will the Son hand over the kingdom to the Father. Then God will turn his sorrow into eternal joy." (ibid)

Then:

"This will be the sign of the completion of the trinitarian history of God and the end of world history, the overcoming of the history of man's sorrow and the fulfilment of his history of hope. God in Auschwitz and Auschwitz in the crucified God - that is the basis for a real hope which both embraces and overcomes the world, and the ground for a love which is stronger than death and can sustain death." (ibid)

This of course irritates those such as Eckardt, who reacts fiercely to the 'trinitarianization' of Auschwitz (I shall look at the separate claim that this is totally non-dialectical theology later). He criticises the triumphalism which seeks to integrate the murder of those who would never have accepted a trinitarian God, into a Christian model (op.cit p685). It would seem though that a Christian theologian will have to account of such events within their Christian framework, insofar as anything is to be accounted within it, and it would be unfair to pick out Moltmann here.

Perhaps Moltmann's greatest weakness here lies with his imputation of unrighteousness to little children: in the fact of their god-forsakenness. At the same time he claims this is all unjustifiable suffering (CG p278). Further, this merely makes theodicy more essential:

for why are we unrighteous when we will not be so in the new creation, unless for instance there is some free will defence criterion to be met? Perhaps it is the case, as I earlier suggested, that the history of hope, so central to Moltmann's picture of things, requires there to be something against which a new creation stands out as better. What then if this necessary prior reality cannot be justified given the deep pain generated by its structures, by that wholeness which follows? It would seem better for a wholly good being to have refrained from creating such a prelude.

Moltmann concludes on the topic of the annihilation of death, that: "It is the ground for living with the terror of history and the end of history, and nevertheless remaining in love and meeting what comes in openness for God's future. It is the ground for living and bearing guilt and sorrow for the future of man in God" (ibid). Still, the ability to meet evil in openness runs the risk that weakness, vulnerability, mortality, and impotence, considered alongside all that they pre-suppose about the world, are seen as simply evil: Golgotha empty of redemptive value: merely a statement of the unjustifiable terror of history, the god-forsakenness of the world, and the power of the reign of death that never should have been.

The closing chapters of The Crucified God earth some of what Moltmann has been saying, in terms of the potential of liberational praxis. In "Ways Towards the Psychological Liberation of Man" (CG p292-316), he looks to a utilisation of psychological insights for giving added depth to theological perspectives on human healing and liberation. In the end the potential seems to add up to a tampering with the symptoms of life lived in a rightly doomed creation. But at least, where the resurrection

transforms vicious circles of the psyche and society, we are raised up to life, rather than orientated upon death.

Thus the final brief chapter concentrates on how practical action can channel and develop this faithfulness to hope, resurrection, earth and cross. Political liberation is centred on an analysis of the five inter-related vicious circles which can be seen at work in technological mass society.¹² The prognosis is an unhappy one. These circles cover economic and political poverty, racial/cultural alienation and industrial abuse of nature. And not least the circle of senselessness and god-forsakenness (CG p330-332). Liberating action has to cover all these areas simultaneously because of the causal interaction between them. In the economic sphere there needs to be social justice in the distribution and control of resources (Socialism). Politically, alienation of the majority from power over their lives is to be ended (Democracy). Racial and cultural integration is not to mean mass uniformity but coming to one's identity in recognition of others (Emancipation). Peace with nature is essential, and thus the rejection of dominance over the earth. This in turn has the consequence of the humanisation of humanity (Ecology). However, in coming to the final circle of deprivation, that of senselessness and god-forsakenness, Moltmann introduces a final element of required fulfilment which takes one above previous concerns with *praxis*. This is the paramount vicious circle that cannot be tackled merely by succeeding in righting all the other dimensions of human existence:

"In the background of personal and public awareness, perplexity, resignation and despair are widespread. This inner poisoning of life extends not only to poor societies, but to rich societies as well. It cannot therefore be overcome simply by victory over economic need, political oppression, cultural alienation and cultural crisis. Nor can it be reduced to these realms and dimensions. The crisis of meaning oppresses an unfulfilled life, and a life filled in in other ways, albeit in different manners. *This wound remains open even in the*

best of all conceivable societies. It can only be healed by the presence of meaning in all events and relationships of life." (CG p334-5: my emphasis)

This is reminiscent of what was said in respect of Bloch's socialist utopianism. The emphasis is on the complete and universal presence of God in the new creation as the only terms on which all can have the meaning it requires for consummation. In the meantime, encouragingly, : "Hell does not lie before men. It has been conquered in the cross. Here life and sacrifice for life against death gain their meaning amidst the general senselessness. This 'courage to be' becomes a 'key for being'" (ibid). Still this courage to be appears to derive its strength from the fact that the new creation brings hope of something unobtainable in this world.

Meanwhile, the question of "vicious circles" becomes more complex, and we realise with ever greater clarity why courage to be draws its strength from the future. Moltmann wishes to hold all five "vicious circles" together. He argues that the first four cannot attain anything without overcoming despair and meaninglessness. Conversely, it is held, meaning and fulfilled life cannot exist without the overcoming of these four preceding vicious circles. But is there a full reciprocity in these conditions? Certainly Moltmann implies there is. They are related and their solution is joint: "Therefore liberation must be sought in all these five dimensions simultaneously in every specific direction. Anyone who falls short here is courting death... It follows from this that in any *theology of liberations* the universal must be understood in the particular and the eschatological *in the historical*" (CG p336). Yet problematically though, there does not seem to be any necessary inter-connection between the latter fulfilment condition and the others. The relationships have already been broken in the passage quoted. 'A'

(establishment of political and cultural, ecological, and economic harmony) can only really bring things into line with God's righteousness if life is given meaning by 'B' (meaningful existence). If by contrast, there were a direct causal link in which the 'A', came about, and resulted in meaningful existence 'B' (or they grew simultaneously in inter-dependence), then the liberation argument would have more coherence i.e. as the initiative of a wholly good God. Whilst life with 'A' remains meaningless without 'B' (which it cannot bring about), and 'B' somehow still presupposes 'A', matters are clouded. Practical action will surely always founder in nothingness. It amounts to a thankless task for humanity, poisoned and bearing an open wound so long as it is actually living in a world where even societal perfection cannot bring real meaning. Perhaps the possibility of attaining meaning from within a perfected social human world mediating God's love, would go some way to encouraging and enabling people to create such a world. That this is not possible without new creation only makes the poison of life in a world without meaning more understandable. Is there a dialectic at work; or has humanity, even the little burning children, earned its fate from the unrighteousness of the species: mortality as the wages of sin: innocent suffering as the price of authentic human freedom and responsibility? Yet as Moltmann has said, such suffering is unjustifiable. So what case can there be for not having created humanity from the first with the new freedom which is to be enjoyed in the new creation? An extremely weak one it appears. However, this is arguably deceptive. Since it could be held that it is extremely difficult to see what we could make of the claim that God is wholly good, we could already be dealing with a God of whom it is best to say that he is probably quite good. With this weakening in moral perfection, the difficulties in providing a case to explain why

God might not have created us free from the beginning are not insurmountable.

So, what are the consequences of the fact that brotherhood with Christ has its power in the "sighing and liberating spirit of God" - "Its consummation lies in the kingdom of the triune God which sets all things free and fills them with meaning" (CG p338).

I believe that the critique I have attempted in this chapter needs little in the way of summing up. The most important feature is the manner in which Moltmann seems to truncate and distort the theodicy question, so that what is at issue, and why, the possibility of the existence of a God who is wholly good and perfectly just, seems dangerously obscured. And damagingly for Moltmann, his theology affirms that there has been unjustifiable suffering. There looks as yet to be no reason why we should believe that the difficult questions asked in the conventional debate are of a kind we can lay aside.

CHAPTER SEVEN

In the preface to The Trinity and The Kingdom of God, Moltmann distances himself from attempts to write theological systems, since: "In principle one has to be able to say everything, and not to leave any point unconsidered. All the statements must fit in with one another without contradiction". There are different issues to be dealt with here. First, systems. A system can indeed be an attempt to encompass all. But if Moltmann does not wish to attempt this, this does not mean that he need not be systematic in the approach to an issue. That is, in being systematic one tries to identify the relevant issues, and to move intelligibly from one to the other. Whilst he may be justified in his sceptical attitude to theological systems, Moltmann is arguably mistaken if what one does say is held to be free from the condition that it does not ultimately contradict itself. For even if one is modest enough not to claim to have covered everything it is difficult to claim convincingly special exemption from basic conditions of coherence. It may be that certain parts of what one says are held to be superficially contradictory, or go beyond what 'facts' would seem to allow. For example, it may appear that a theodist cannot discern a justificatory pattern to suffering free from major criticism, and that much suffering appears still frankly incompatible with the existence of a wholly good God. However, theodists will claim that although they cannot put forward a totally foolproof theodicy, there is a justification, or at least the possibility of one (whilst no final proof of impossibility is obtained). The perceived incompatibility between what exists, and God's existing is not real and final. In this sense, even if we do not claim to have stated the whole, we are not committing ourselves to an abandonment of the criterion of non self-contradiction. For whilst our

present thought points only in the direction of an answer, it does point to the possibility of a certain kind of answer; that evil is justified. Whilst it is only suggested in what Moltmann says that coherence is optional, his statement should not be allowed to pass without this distinction between the construction of universal interlocking systems and more limited thinking being qualified by recognition of the condition that both approaches be coherent; even if this means, in the case of theodicy, attempting to defend eschatological verification (as with Ahern).

Moltmann goes on to argue that thinking in terms of theological systems encourages uncritical acceptance and a lack of genuine discussion. His own systematic contributions are to do no more than prepare the way for a future theological debate which "will be broader and more intensive" (TKG pXII). The kind of theology he is writing "has no longer to be" Eurocentric, androcentric, and nor does it have to reflect a 'first world' position. Thus: "We normally presuppose the absolute nature of our standpoint in our own context. To abolish this tacit presupposition is the intention behind the phrase 'contributions to theology'. Moltmann also emphasises the placing of theological discussion in an unfinished, and "uncompletable" dialogue in history. Nevertheless each generation is allowed to come to some sort of conclusion, in that "there are unsettled theological problems for which every new generation has to find its own solution if it is to be able to live with them at all" (TKG pXIII). Indeed, he goes on to maintain that by "recognising limits we can step beyond them"; theological testimonies can be viewed in their particularity, or they "can also be investigated and interpreted in the light of their universality" (TKG pXV).

Perhaps clarification on how far Moltmann really manages to escape the traditional *interest* in being comprehensive and systematic (even if he does not create a traditional system as such), comes in the preface to Richard Bauckham's study "Moltmann". There, Moltmann retrospectively recognises a closer unity and organisation in his work in general, than he may previously have allowed for:

'Bauckham... goes into the movement of the ideas and shows the coherence of the arguments. In this way he brings to light the concealed methods I have used. He demonstrates the consistence and coherence of the thought even where I myself had the feeling of being led by spontaneous inspiration or of only being carried back and forth." (Moltmann: Messianic Theology in the Making - R Bauckham. pVII)

In the following discussion of The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, I shall attempt to present some of the main (perhaps also the concealed) features of this important book as they relate to the question of suffering. The approach is to offer a presentation successively dealing with aspects of chapters one, and two, three, four, and six, with critical discussion interspersed.'

The opening chapter, "Trinitarian Theology Today", takes a brief look at the way contemporary trinitarian thinking is done, and introduces three historic views on the nature of God. First though, Moltmann notes a dearth of trinitarian thinking. So he will discuss some objections and tacit reservations concerning this doctrine (TKG p2), beginning with a criticism of the understanding of the God-human relationship as seen through the category of experience. Schleiermacher is the principal object of interest here. Moltmann agrees with the at least apparent logic of Schleiermacher's position. God statements not including statements about the immediate self-consciousness are not direct expressions of Christian self-conscience, but constructs (TKG p3). However, he strongly criticises what he sees as the consequent tendency

to abstract monotheism and the relegation of the trinity. What about the other side of the relationship - "how does God experience me?" (ibid) It is not of course a case of a relationship between equals, but it is one of love and covenant. The person means something to God. Indeed "it is only when the self is perceived in the experience which God has with that self that an undistorted perception of that history of one's own self with God and in God emerges" (TKG p4). The bible testifies to God's history and experience with people. And crucially, experiencing in faith how God has experienced us, and still does experience us, is to perceive how the world's history is the 'history of God's suffering' (ibid):

"At the moments of God's profoundest revelation there is always suffering: the cry of the captives in Egypt; Jesus' death cry on the cross; the sighing of the whole enslaved creation for liberty... God suffers with us - God suffers from us - God suffers for us." (ibid)

This can only be understood in trinitarian terms. Moltmann goes on to state that the fundamental discussion of access to trinitarian doctrine is carried on today in the question of God's capacity or incapacity for suffering. This explains why chapter two, which I shall look at shortly, explores the positive handling of the passion of God, and only then does the discussion move to the "doctrine of the Trinity in the narrower sense".

Moltmann's introductory discussion continues with a lengthy reflection on the importance of suffering. Something which he seems to put forward as a constant is the fact that experience includes both wonder and pain. Thus: "In wonder the subject opens himself for a counterpart... In pain the subject perceives the difference of the other, the contradiction in conflict and the alteration of his own self" (TKG p5).

Moltmann talks of a new approach to thinking about God, avoiding the out-dated cosmology of substance thinking, and the escapist tendencies of pure subjectivity. It will concentrate instead on the history of Jesus the Son before asking about the unity, and so will be a new "historical doctrine of the Trinity" (TKG p19). The unity will be looked at in terms of the trinity of the persons; a social trinity. Trinitarian hermeneutics will be applied to scripture, and thinking in terms of communities and relationships along with panentheistic concepts will mark the effort to "think ecologically about God, man and the world in their relationships and their indwellings" (ibid).

Following the opening manifesto, comes the discussion of God's passion. Theologies of absolute substance or subject dealt, it is held, with a God incapable of suffering. However, Christ's passion is at the centre of the Christian proclamation. God is involved, but how? Is God suffering? (TKG p22) A treatment similar to that in The Crucified God. Greek metaphysics with the apathetic axiom have rendered God silent and cold, or resulted in complex efforts at mediating apathy and passion. Moltmann thinks it better to start with God's passion as the axiom. Thus, in line with what was previously said, it held that God can suffer from an abundance of being rather than any implied deficiency (TKG p23). Amongst patristic theologians Origen is singled out as the only one to recognise that there could be this suffering from super-abundance of love. Further when he talks of the divine suffering he does so in a Trinitarian context, because as Moltmann believes, it alone can give a viable account of God and suffering.

This second chapter of The Trinity and The Kingdom of God is dedicated to developing a doctrine of theopathy, an understanding of the passionate

God. In order to achieve this, Moltmann reviews Rabbinic, Kabbalistic, Anglican, Spanish, and Russian-Orthodox thought.

In the discussion of Abraham Heschel (TKG p25ff), we have an expansion of what Moltmann has said earlier on the same subject. God in his pathos goes out into his chosen people, is affected by its experience, suffers with and for it. A bi-polar theology is detected. God is free, yet chooses to love his people. He reigns in heaven, simultaneously dwelling with the humble. A second bi-polarity is also said to exist: "The sympathy of man responds to the experience of the divine pathos. That too is determined by God... The sympathy of the spirit which comes from God responds to the pathos in which God goes out of himself". And: "... the experience of the divine pathos inevitably leads to the perception of the self-differentiation of the one God" (TKG p27).

Early rabbinic theology and the doctrine of the *Shekinah* are called on to follow up these insights. God's pathos is known here as divine humiliation:

"The history of the world develops out of a series of divine humiliations and it is these that it represents: the creation, the choosing of the patriarchs, the covenant with the people... are all forms of this self-humiliation on God's part." (TKG p27)

Although it is held these humiliations are to be understood as "accommodations" to our human weakness (ibid), the concluding remarks on the *Shekinah* (TKG p30), suggest that the human weakness may well stem from the very nature of the divine creational humiliation. *Shekinah* is understood as having three dimensions, indwelling, condescension, and anticipation (TKG p28). The *Shekinah* came to be seen as not only a characteristic of God, but as "God in person". (ibid) Moltmann cites Gershom Scholem to the effect that in God there exists a profound self-

differentiation which will not be overcome until the "original harmony" is restored. Although he qualifies his look at this area of Jewish thought by stating that it is only one amongst many in the deep Jewish experience, Moltmann is convinced that the pathos of God means acceptance of differentiation, or a "rift" in God. He sees "moving potentiality" in the application of Shekinah thought to the suffering of the Jewish people: "... it allows us to comprehend ... the story of its martyrs as the history of the suffering of the tortured divine Shekinah... 'My head is heavy, my arm is heavy' says a Mishnah, talking about the way God suffers with the torments of the hanged" (TKG p30).

What of the origins of the *Shekinah*; the divorce, the rift in God? "The answer can only really be: the dichotomy in God which is... based on the pathos and the initial self-humiliation through which the Almighty goes out of himself and becomes involved with the limited world and with the freedom of his image in that world" (TKG p30). I shall discuss this position later when looking at God in Creation.

Moltmann proceeds to a brief discussion of English thought (late 19th, early 20th century) on divine suffering (TKG p30ff). He draws mainly on three theologians (J K Mozley The Impassibility of God, J Hinton The Mystery of Pain, and C E Rolt The World's Redemption), maintaining that the hall-mark of Anglican theology of this period was the concern to take the earthly cross seriously, perceiving in it the "primordial heavenly image" (TKG p32). He takes up Mozley's reference to Bushnell's The Vicarious Sacrifice (London 1866, p35). Bushnell wrote:

"It is as if there were a cross unseen, standing on its undiscovered hill, far back in the ages, out of which were sounding always, just the same deep voice of suffering love and patience that was heard by mortal ears from the sacred hill of Calvary." (TKG p32)

Curiously, where the Anglican contributors to the theology of suffering are concerned, all seem to go against Moltmann's own anti-theodicy position. Horace Bushnell's book integrates suffering into the divine life, arguing that love is joy (indeed is love) precisely in so far as it involves suffering: "We are never so happy, so essentially blessed, as when we suffer well, wearing out our life in sympathies spent on the evil and undeserving, burdened heavily in our prayers, struggling on through secret Gethsemanes, and groaning before God, in groanings audible to God alone... What man of the race ever finds that in such love as this he has been made unhappy?" (The Vicarious Sacrifice p16-17: London 1866) The idea that there is unjustifiable suffering is not pursued by Bushnell.²

Moltmann also cites James Hinton's The Mystery of Pain: "If God would show us Himself, He must show us Himself as a sufferer, as taking what we call pain and loss. These are his portion; from eternity He chose them. The life Christ shows us is the eternal life" (TMP London, 1886 p40 -TKG *ibid*). The theological problems inherent in a statement such as this, with its notion of choosing from eternity and the question of divine foreknowledge in creation, and how this is related to predictability, divine freedom, and necessity, potentially of great importance to an understanding of his own position, are not pursued by Moltmann. In addition, Hinton's is a statement which must arguably cast doubt on the ability of a theologian to claim that theodicy is impermissible, and that unjustifiable suffering cannot be considered as part of the divine responsibility. After all, God has chosen the path of suffering, and if he will choose to suffer some of the evil that has come about, given the way the world is, and he did this from eternity, then he cannot renounce knowledge and responsibility for that evil which is 'unjustifiable', but concomitant with the way the world goes.

Hinton's attitude to pain can only be described as positive, even if there is an appearance that pain might be truly evil. Overall, suffering appears to have its justification. Of one important kind of suffering, he states: "... there is one condition under which all know that pain is not truly an evil, but a good. This is when pain is borne for another's sake. Its entire character is altered then. It not only passes into the category of good things, but it also emphatically becomes *the good*... All kinds of pleasure fall infinitely below it... Conceive all martyrdoms blotted out from the world's history; how blank and barren were the page!" (TMP p11-12). In fact, Hinton's approach is to hold that all evil is for the good, and on these grounds, justifiable: "It is in the power... of the discovery of an unknown or unregarded fact to alter our feelings - even to invert their natural character.." (TMP p10). And: "The apparent good and evil of life constitute a case in which a truer understanding might invert the natural impression" (TMP p11). It is held that: "There are materials... within us for an entire inversion of our attitude towards pain. The world in this respect, we might almost feel, seems to tremble on the balance. A touch might transform it wholly. One flash of light from the Unseen, one word spoken by God, might suffice to make the dark places bright..." (TMP p13).

Moltmann writes of how Rolt, in response to Darwinian challenges to the idea of God's power, argued that the divine power was love, made perfect through willing suffering as on the cross (TKG p31: TWR p30). Christ is humble and weak, and therefore carrying this into the eternal being of God, one is to say that God is weak, that the mystery of the cross is eternally at the heart of God (ibid: TWR p27). The essence of God as self-love is self-sacrifice. Moltmann offers the following summary: "... God's eternal bliss is not bliss based on the absence of suffering. On

the contrary, it is bliss that becomes bliss through suffering's acceptance and transformation. In the eternal joy of the Trinity, pain is not avoided; it is accepted and transmuted into glory" (TKG p34). Moltmann's summary again: "Through openness and capacity for suffering, the divine love shows that it is life's pre-eminent organizing principle in the deadly conflicts of blind natural forces" (TKG p33). How does Moltmann handle the following texts? "'Brute force... comes from God and He is responsible for it. Good and evil come from the same source and are therefore precisely the same thing'" (ibid: TWR p124). And: "'Evil exists precisely because He commands it not to exist" (ibid: TWR p126). Moltmann writes:

"A statement like this only makes sense if 'non-existence' has the power of nullity as whatever is shut out from God. But then the statement makes very good sense indeed. Because God creates order and excludes chaos, chaos (as what has been excluded by creation) is an ever-present threat to that creation. If, now, God endures this evil in suffering love, then he transforms its power into vital energy." (TKG p34)

Rolt's The World's Redemption (p228), gives one an outline of the nature of the divine love: "God is a Trinity because He is perfect love; and therefore the Holy Trinity is one perfect and ineffable bliss. And that bliss consists not so much in the absence of pain, but rather in the victory over all its pangs. In the eternal joy of the Trinity all pain is, not avoided, but overcome and transmuted into glory... But eternity is not independent of time: it is time's crown and goal. God must, therefore pass through time to attain to His own eternal being. And in this passage he must experience the pain as untransmuted pain. Only thus can He transmute it, and by it, attain to His own perfection" (TWR p247 - my citation). Rolt's theology is evidently processual, and contains a powerful justification for suffering. It is not compatible with Moltmann's stance on evil and theodicy.

Moltmann also considers that Studdert-Kennedy's The Hardest Part should have received greater attention than Barth's almost contemporary Epistle to the Romans - for, "the theology of the suffering God is more important than the theology of the God who is Wholly Other" (TKG p35). He highlights Studdert Kennedy's profound sense of the suffering of God, as revealed in the cross. The following is quoted (along with two other passages):

"I want to win the world to the worship of the patient, suffering Father God revealed in Jesus Christ... God, the Father God of Love, is everywhere in history, but nowhere is He Almighty. Ever and always we see Him suffering, striving, crucified, but conquering. God is Love."
(THP p42; TKG p35)

^{-Kennedy} Studdert[^] also wrote in The Hardest Part that God, in giving rise to creation: "... was forced to limit Himself... He had to bind Himself with chains and pierce Himself with nails, and take upon Himself the travail pangs of creation. The universe was made as it is because it is the only way it could be made, and this way lays upon God the burden of many failures and of eternal strain" (THP p26). This shows a divine comprehension and acceptance of evil. Arguably it also means that Studdert^{-Kennedy}[^] can't categorize evils as unjustifiable without making God appear perverse. After all, a suffering world whose creation requires a kind of agonized bondage, and which was consciously "made as it is", cannot be incompatible with God's being wholly good. Where this fits in with my case on the theodicy problem, is that God's being wholly good would strongly suggest that his permitting, giving rise to, irredeemable, ultimately unjustifiable innocent suffering could not be contemplated, as once innocent and unjustified suffering it remains forever innocent and unjustified. To make a suffering world like this one, God may have to work within a narrow range of specification, but there is no obligation to create such a world if doing so will result in sickening and irredeem^eable suffering (indeed, the point is, it is incoherent to suggest

that a wholly good God could create such a world). Moving on from his survey of English contributions to comprehending the passion of God, Moltmann comes to Miguel de Unamuno.

The relatively lengthy treatment of "The Tragic Sense of Life" (TKG p36-42), is well-disposed to Unamuno's case. Life is a tragedy, a struggle without victory. It cannot be fulfilled, and that contradiction between existence and death is to be affirmed. Life can do no other. Moltmann writes of this: "He wants to affirm it in order to cling to the profound experience of disagreement: it is man's sharpest pain to try very hard and not achieve anything:" (TKG p37; c.f., TTSL chapters 7 and 9). Unamuno's '*congoja*', is the pain, sorrow, and anguish of this life. Such an awareness, coupled with reflection on the cross and suffering of Christ led him to break with the "God of the philosophers", and move to a theology of God's infinite sorrow. Suffering is no mere emptiness. Moltmann cites Unamuno's statement that:

"... the truth of the suffering God, which so appals the mind of man, is the revelation emerging from the very matrix and mystery of the universe. It was revealed to us when God sent his Son so that he might redeem us by suffering and dying. It was the revelation of the divine nature of suffering, since only that which suffers is divine..."

He notes that Unamuno makes a concession to tradition in recognising that this may sound like blasphemy, and refers to the doctrine of matter which partly explains why there is suffering (although not quite why God *had* to realise a suffering creation). I quote the Crawford Fritch translation (TTSL 1931 McMillan: p207), as the Trinity and the Kingdom of God version is a re-translation of the German translation:

"It may perhaps appear blasphemous to say that God suffers, for suffering implies limitation. Nevertheless, God, the Consciousness of the Universe, is limited by the brute matter in which He lives, by the unconscious, from which He seeks to liberate himself and to liberate us. And we, in our turn must seek to liberate Him. God suffers in each and all of us, in each and all of the consciousnesses imprisoned in transitory matter, and we all suffer in him. Religious anguish is but the divine suffering, the feeling that God suffers in me and that

I suffer in Him. (op.cit.: TKG p39)

Moltmann notes too how Unamuno thought that suffering was essential to life, as being a condition of consciousness (ibid), and goes on to quote the statement in the discussion of Schopenhauer in chapter seven (where Unamuno holds that the 'true property and most inward function of the will is to suffer, will being a corollary of consciousness) that: "The capacity for pleasure is impossible without the capacity for suffering, and the faculty of pleasure is the same as the faculty of pain. He who does not suffer does not enjoy, just as he who does not perceive cold does not perceive heat either" (ET - p162 of vol.4 Selected Works: RKP and PUP 1972 / p147 of McMillan ed. 1931/ TKG p41). The first part of this statement is questionable, as the potential to experience or comprehend something does not mean that we need realise this potential to an extreme. God can conceive of unjustifiable evil, but he does not need to subject himself or others to it, or perpetrate it, in order to do so (I am assuming of course that there could be such a thing as justifiable evil, which must be the possibility behind theodicy). However, the second part is more interesting. It is a debateable contention that for a wholly good being, if they do not experience suffering, they cannot experience joy. But if we look at the world, it is evident that if we cannot experience pain or heat, we cannot experience joy or cold, and the world in which the kinds of somatic beings we are, come to be, is a world in which there is inevitably and necessarily human experience of pain as well as an occasional sense of joy. We can say of our openness to such experience - as human beings - that joy and suffering are symbiotic binary opposites. These things are unavoidable if we live in this world, and are not in some way damaged. Taken as the beings that we are, in the world that there is (and ignoring arguments of the kind that all possible beings must actually experience suffering if they are to

experience joy), we recognise that what is perceived as good and beautiful, as in the happy child, is one aspect of a natural spectrum which also encompasses senile dementia and mortality. We cannot have the Engadine without Lisbon. This is in effect what Unamuno says: in the reality there is, the person who does not experience suffering does not experience joy. That is, if you are alive in this world, you will experience both. But what if we are alive and experience unjustifiable suffering (let alone unjustifiable joy)? For Unamuno there appears no really unjustifiable suffering, even if we give it this label, because his God is the kind of God who will stop at nothing in order to give reality to consciousness, suffering, hope: and if we are to call anything worthwhile, we might as well start with the kind of world which we have, which includes or even pre-supposes all kinds of the most degrading and innocent suffering. What is the alternative?

Moltmann sees the eschatological aspect to Unamuno's thought as the dimension which prevents it from becoming almost masochistic, and writes: "How could we participate in God's sorrow and feel compassion with God's pain if this unquenchable hope for the reversal of all things and for the divine redemption were not involved?" (TKG p42) As to the theodicy question, he describes Unamuno's idea in the theology of divine sorrow as a "simple one". "Either God lets people suffer, or he suffers himself... The God who lets the innocent suffer is the accused in theodicy's court. The God who suffers everything in everyone is his only possible defending counsel" (TKG p40). I believe that Unamuno offers a theodicy of a stronger kind in his understanding of consciousness; in fact suffering is necessary if there is to be a world. I am not concerned with how Unamuno himself develops this idea, although I think his is vulnerable for the same reasons that Moltmann's accounts of it are: the theodicy argument

answered here on the basis that God joins in; rather than looking at divine responsibility and the implications of innocent suffering as innocent for all time. More importantly, it is arguably secondary to an understanding of suffering and its role completely incompatible with Moltmann's: the difference between suffering as embraced, and as something caught between a partial embrace and utter dismay.

Unamuno's thought, as I have suggested, has a much more robust attitude to evil than does Moltmann's. Consequently it has little to give in the way of support. Take the following:

"Is not pain essential to life?

Men go on inventing theories to explain what they call the origin of evil. And why not the origin of good? Why suppose that it is good that is positive and original, and evil that is negative and derivatory?... What does 'being good' mean? Good is good for something, conducive to an end... our desire is to eternalize ourselves, to persist, and we call good everything which conspires to this end and bad everything which tends to lessen or destroy our consciousness." (op.cit p247)

Then his attitude to war. Unamuno argues that the attentions of the inquisitor are preferable to the merchant. The one views me as an end, the other as a means to an end. The latter has a 'supreme indifference' to my destiny:

"Similarly there is much more humanity in war than in peace. Non-resistance to evil implies resistance to good... War is the school of fraternity and the bond of love; it is war that has brought people into touch with one another, by mutual aggression and collision, and has been the cause of their knowing and loving one another... even the purified hate that springs from war is fruitful. War is in its strictest sense the sanctification of homicide... God revealed Himself above all in war...; and one of the greatest services of the Cross is that, in the form of the sword-hilt, it protects the hand that wields the sword." (TTSL p280: McMillan 1931)

He and Moltmann would concur that death is a bad thing. But for the inspired Unamuno, the death of the innocent does not appear to be so much of a problem as it is for Moltmann.

The treatment of Berdyaev (TKG p42-47: refs to The Meaning of History, ET Scribner 1939, and Spirit and Reality, ET Scribner 1939 and 1946), centres on interpretation of ideas on the suffering in God (the "tragedy in God"). For Berdyaev, God suffers because humanity is free, a humanity which exists because of a divine "'longing for the beloved, the one who freely loves...'" ; the Other (TKG p43: TMOH p57). Berdyaev's image of the divine life as in a sense a deep historical drama is, as Moltmann says, a challenge to monism (ibid). Monism excludes movement or suffering love from God, and according to Berdyaev, two primary criticisms can be made of it (TKGp44: TMOH p46-47). First, how can monism conceive of God as the source of a diverse and 'non-identical' world? Second, upholders of monism fall victim to dualism rather than avoiding it, in that they set God in radical opposition to the world. Berdyaev thinks in terms of a historical dialectic where no such contradictions emerge. Thus God longs for the response of the free Other (TKG p45: ref. to TMOH p48); God is involved in a history, and can move and suffer.

It is important for Moltmann that Berdyaev "... finds the ground for the creation of the world within the Trinity, not outside it" (TKG p46). This earthly freedom is to be seen as having history as an element in the heavenly history (noted TKG p47); the history of the divine love suffering for the Other. Moltmann ends by quoting from Spirit and Reality (TKG ref. to 1946 ed. p106), where some light is thrown on the origin of suffering, not that Berdyaev would want to explain *how* freedom actually results in suffering:

'Evil and suffering exist because freedom exists; but freedom has no origin; it is an ultimate frontier. But because freedom exists, God Himself suffers and is crucified. The Divine love and sacrifice are God's answer to the mystery of freedom wherein evil and suffering have their origin. Divine love and sacrifice are likewise freedom.'

What then of the question of Berdyaev's conception of the value of freedom? This is of importance for theodicy. The last sentence of the passage quoted above represents Berdyaev's commitment to the idea that freedom and tragedy go together. The belief that this is something positive and necessary is expressed in the following words of Berdyaev:

'Existence in the wicked world is a paradox for our spiritual life - a paradox because *good* and *evil* are correlated. The struggle for *good* supposes the resistance of *evil*, just as the struggle for freedom supposes the resistance of violence and force. The experience of *evil* enriches *good*, as a result of that creative effort and knowledge which are called into being by contradiction and struggle, as a result of that knowledge which is gained through division and polarization, through submitting to trials." (Spirit and Reality p123: The Centenary Press 1939)

Berdyaev is critical of the rationalistic tradition which cannot accept the reality of unjustified suffering as compatible with God's existence (SR p104, 1939 ed.). It is hindered by a moralistic hankering that good and evil be distributed upon individuals according to their worth. In fact, the world is not open to a rationalistic theory of divine providence (op.cit p106). It has to be accepted as a world of unjust suffering. To understand Berdyaev's viewpoint, one has to see that "Evil may be a cause, but it has itself no cause. Freedom is a definite mystery, an irrational element. It engenders evil as well as good without any discrimination, content simply to engender" (op.cit p113).

Like Unamuno, Berdyaev has a 'robust' attitude to evil, one which arguably goes beyond what Moltmann could countenance. As I have noted, he disparages the 'bourgeois' notion that suffering should really be proportionate to moral status. Whilst Berdyaev recognises that there is unjustifiable suffering, he believes that:

"There is nothing spiritual or even human about a completely happy and contented creature, impervious to evil, suffering, pain and tragedy." (SR p102)

Also:

"For the most part man is obliged to attribute his fortune or misfortune to chance - to an irrational and inexplicable element acting independently of all laws. A particular *combination of circumstances* revealed in chance is not determined by any special laws... It is a serious error to interpret chance as an expression of a universal will directing life towards a uniform goal... The significance of *unfortunate accidents* lies in the trial of our spiritual strength, in the subjective rather than the objective sphere. From the objective standpoint universal life has no purpose, but the task of spirit is to infuse it with purpose." (SR p103)

And of the unjust suffering of Jesus:

"... *unjust suffering*, that of a just man, was transformed into a mystery - a mystery of salvation. Therein unjust suffering appeared in another light... Unjust suffering was Divine suffering. And unjust Divine suffering proved to be the expiation of all human suffering." (SR p106)

"It is a world in which prophets are stoned and unjust men, the persecutors and crucifiers of the just, are triumphant. It is a world in which innocent children and innocent animals have to suffer. It is a world in which death and suffering reign supreme. Is Divine Providence effective in this world? That is the question of reason - meaningless when confronted with the mystery and secret of love... Suffering is a mystery because it can also become expiation." (ibid)

Berdyayev, in the statement that suffering can also be expiation, seems to offer the possibility of something in suffering itself which might be its justification. If not, since God created a world which simply spawns good and evil without reason, we would be justified in talking of God repenting of his sins and his mistake in creating as he did. Such a God could not be the wholly good God of Christian belief.

Berdyayev's idea of freedom is interesting. There seems no reason why freedom should not continue to give rise to unjustifiable evils for ever; and there seems no reason why divine suffering as expiation, without suffering being its own justification, should lead us to conclude that it would have been better to have refrained from creating; especially if we wish to retain the notion that God is wholly good in the sense that he wishes to preserve being and enrich it, without being compelled to simultaneously permit its destruction by 'irrational' created forces.

That is unless the existence of such forces contributes to a worthwhile good in creation taken as an organic whole. If this latter idea is considered repulsive, then it is arguable that the idea of a wholly good God's creating the kind of world there is, is implausible.

Berdyayev thinks that rationalisation of evil leads to its denial (SR p106). Yet it is the 'irrationality' of evil which is exactly the threat to the belief that creation is the work and responsibility of the God who is wholly good. A theodist might wish to argue that even if people rarely suffer in ways proportional to their moral failure (if we would want them to), they may do so as a consequence of the world being the kind of world where it is possible to make free decisions for good or evil, and (as with Swinburne) it is right that our freedom have exercise in situations of real responsibility. A very good person may suffer because someone else chooses evil. But they could not have made the good and meaningful free choices that they did if this kind of free wrong decision were not possible. But Berdyayev doesn't think in these terms. Freedom is a mystery, and it mysteriously engenders good and evil. Moltmann thinks that if someone is truly free, then choosing the good is a matter of course (TKG p214). There seems to be a fundamental incompatibility between the two positions. Berdyayev has thrown away a trust in providence which expects to see it prevent the suffering of innocent children and animals. It clearly doesn't. One is left with the impression that providence may work through injustice and cruelty, rather than against them per se. With Moltmann, the hope for justice is never far away, and the attack on theodicy which both repudiates it as an enterprise because it can never justify the suffering that has occurred, and claims that it can never be abandoned, represents a wholly different perspective on things, and one that is perhaps more confusing.

Moltmann shows how far he is from Unamuno and Berdyaev with the second paragraph of the section God and Suffering in chapter two (TKG p47ff). I have discussed this material previously, so I will not do so again. However, it is worth citing for a second time in order to gain a clear sense of the contrast between Moltmann and the two previous figures. It is stated:

"... incomprehensible suffering calls the God of men and women in question. The suffering of a single innocent child is an irrefutable rebuttal of the notion of the almighty and kindly God in heaven."
(TKG p47)

And:

"There is no explanation of suffering which is capable of obliterating his pain, and no consolation of a higher wisdom which could assuage it." (ibid)

He thinks the theodicy question cannot be answered with any new theory about the existing world (TKG p49). In saying this he is of course excluding those theodicies which explain suffering in this world either in terms of what goes on in this world, and the kinds of goods with which it is causally connected, or by reference to this world *and* to a new world to come. In other words, he is by-passing theodicy. And these theodicies are (as every theodicy must be), very much theories or accounts about the existing world and the creatures in it, and the kind of God who made it.

Still, as so often, Moltmann appears to retain the theodicy question in its traditional sense. Theodicy, as he has subsequently written in the SCM Dictionary of Theology, is about justifying God. And it is, one presumes, the gravity of this issue which makes: "The person who believes... not rest content with any slickly explanatory answer to the theodicy question. And he will also resist any attempts to soften the question down" (ibid).³ Again, the critical discussion in chapter three

attempted to clarify the problems inherent in a position which amounts to saying that the defendant cannot have ANY conceivable justification for permitting what they did, but that at the same time, the search for one must go on, with no lowering of the un-meetable standard to be met.

Chapter three of The Trinity and the Kingdom of God deals with the history of the Son, revealer of the trinity (p65ff). I want to look first at section three, 'The Form of the Trinity' (TKG p74). There is a strong sense that God is only coming to be able to relate to those unlike him (rather, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost), through the sending of the Son. Thus:

"Through the sending, the fellowship of the Father and the Son becomes so all-embracing that men and women are taken into it, so that in that fellowship they may participate in Jesus's sonship and call on the Father in the Spirit." (TKG p75)

And:

"[God] In the sending of the Son, differentiates himself from himself and yields himself up. The sending of the Son therefore finds its foundation in a movement which takes place in the divine life itself: it is not merely a movement outwards." (ibid)

Moltmann also states, that as Jesus reveals God as Father of the Son, he: "... takes people - weary and heavy-laden men and women - into the history between this Father and this Son. He reveals that history. The secret of the kingdom which he brings to the poor is to be found in his fellowship with the Father". If it is the case that God is only now coming into relationship with his people, then this helps explain why the forces of nothingness have been so succesful in bringing suffering to the world, and why, as we shall see, there has been a lack of orientation upon the realm of the Good.

He then discusses the passion of the Son (TKG p75ff). The outward side of this suffering is his rejection by dominant groups, and his execution

as criminal. There is too, an inward aspect; his god-forsakenness by the Father. It is held:

"The pain which Jesus suffered from his God and Father is the special thing about this passion on Golgotha compared with the history of the suffering of so many innocent and righteous people." (TKG p76)

However, it is also said:

"Of course there is also quite simply fear of the horribly slow death ahead of him... But it would be... foolish to see him as an especially sensitive person who was overcome by self-pity at the prospects of death awaiting him... The appalling silence of the Father in response to the Son's prayer in Gethsemane is more than the silence of death. /... He was not merely assailed by fear and suffering in his human nature... He was assailed in his person, his very essence, in His relationship to the Father..." (TKG p76-77)

So, the appalling slow death is seen as secondary to the silence of the Father. Yet it seems to be that the silence of the Father implies god-forsakenness, and this is also equated with the rule of nothingness and death elsewhere. I believe that if God is the kind of God who permits unjustifiable suffering in his creation, one which communicates the fullness of his love, then in the final analysis, it is no worse to be the Son, forsaken and made curse by this God (although very surprising if total confidence is had), than it is to be any godforsaken human being in a world for which there is no moral justification. That is, the creature who is god-forsaken is no better or worse off than the Son who is abandoned. As Mark Twain said, "No-one gets out alive". That the Son has enjoyed a unique intimacy with the Father is paralleled by the fate of the creation which has a unique dependency on its progenitor.⁴ The son is made curse, as, we might judge from Moltmann's characterisations of the world, it itself has been made curse. From sin yes. But whence sin? From the way the world was made, as I shall be discussing shortly.

Let us imagine a king and his son, and an anarchic and despairing populace. The king has set up political structures which he knows will

generate turmoil and unjustifiable suffering amongst his subjects. Nevertheless, he feels that they communicate the best of his political wisdom and his care. After many years, and great famines and oppressions, the king takes pity on his people, and sends his son out amongst them. He wants to express his love for his subjects by subjecting one of the royal family to the kinds of humiliations that others are used to. The son, a resolute and fair character, with a generosity, balance, and obedience not to be found amongst the degraded and suspicious peasantry, or the brutal over-lords, is put to death - like so many others destroyed by a corrupt and brutalised society. Yet it is not the degradation of the gallows which is the greatest cause of distress, but the thought of separation from his father, the king, who has made all around possible, and with whom the son has always enjoyed a much closer relationship than any subject. Still, with the death of the son, the king, though grief-stricken, is able to claim that he too, or the royal family, has suffered all there is to suffer in a cruel and leaderless realm. The royal experience is now that of every ordinary man and woman, and is thus much fuller than before. From now on, there will be a new constitution, a Bill of Rights, and a general happiness.

Clearly this is a caricature of an extreme sort, of what we might want to say about a theology which blurs the meaning of love and justice, which appears to suggest that love no longer means that those who are dependent need be protected from unjustifiable suffering. Once this fundamental condition is gone, and once we recognise the unjust suffering of innocent dependent creature for what it is, then any suffering experienced by the ultimately responsible party is not as shocking as it might otherwise seem. And if being wholly good has no clear meaning, then (by most terms) viciously paradoxical statements can be made. The following passage

exemplifies the problems in identifying what Moltmann's stance on unjustifiable evil really is. It all seems as if things are in process towards God's becoming something more or richer than previously, and that this is a good and worthwhile thing:

'What the love of God is - the love 'from which nothing can separate us' (Rom 8.39) - becomes event on the cross and is experienced under the cross. The Father who sends his Son through all the abysses and hells of God-forsakenness, of the divine curse and final judgment is, in his Son, everywhere with those who are his own; he has become universally present. In giving up the Son he gives 'everything' and 'nothing' can separate us from him. This is the beginning of the language of the kingdom of God, in which 'God will be all in all'. Anyone who perceives God's presence and love in the God-forsakenness of the crucified Son, sees God in all things, just as, once having faced the experience of death, a person feels the living character of everything in a hitherto un-dreamed of way." (TKG p820)

In 'God and Freedom' (TKG p52ff), Moltmann makes an interesting case. He is opposed to a nominalist conception of divine freedom, and is strongly disposed to the view that although God freely determines to create, this is also an overflowing of the divine goodness: "*His decision is a disclosure of himself*" (TKG p54). That is, God does not have the choice of mutually exclusive possibilities (ibid); between being love and not love. In a 'Mackiean' statement, Moltmann tells us:

"If he is love, then in loving the world he is by no means 'his own prisoner'; on the contrary, in loving the world he is entirely free because he is entirely himself." (TKG p55)

He believes that: "The freedom of having to choose between good and evil is less than the freedom of desiring the good and performing it" (TKG p55). I think problems arise when the divine love becomes that of a suffering God: suffering because he loves beings who are not free to be themselves (are *not* themselves), and who find that as they are, they are continually tormented by choice. Of course, it may be that people choosing evil are expressing what they are: they have some corrupted essence or rationality. What are the implications if they are not, and act under duress, or with a compromised range of choice? And if they are

acting as beings entirely themselves, what kinds of beings has God created; if they are flawed, what kind of culpability can we put upon them? Consider what Moltmann says next:

'Man does not already participate in God's eternal freedom in the *posse non peccare* of his primordial condition. He only partakes of it in the *non posse peccare* of glory and grace. This is therefore freedom for the good. The person who is truly free no longer has to choose... the person who chooses has the torment of choice. Anyone who has to choose is continually threatened by evil, by the enemy, by injustice, because these things are always present as potentialities. true freedom is not 'the torment of choice,' with its doubts and threats; it is simple, undivided joy in the good." (ibid)

On the following page he writes:

'His [God's] freedom is his vulnerable love, his openness, the encountering kindness through which he suffers with the human beings he loves and becomes their advocate... Through his freedom he keeps man, his image, and his world, creation, free - keeps them free and pays the price of the their freedom. Through his freedom he waits for man's love, for his compassion, for his own deliverance to his glory through man." (TKG p56)

The question remains, what is it to say that humanity is the *imago dei*, and that human beings are free? One understands that the freedom that we have has a great price. And yet, surely the price God pays, and we pay, is that of the fact that we are not truly free. We enjoy a 'primordial' freedom 'continually threatened by injustice.'

Perhaps an understanding of the divine love will help clarify why we enjoy this peculiar freedom, when there is, as Moltmann himself agrees, a higher and better freedom, one true image of freedom, as it were: God's freedom. In the section 'God is Love' (TKG p57ff), Moltmann makes a number of significant points. First, as I have also noted before "Love is the self-communication of the good". It is to be distinguished from "destructive passions" (ibid). It wants to "give life" and live; it is not about self-renunciation. It is the self-giving of the good "without self-dissolution" (ibid). Significantly, "The loving person enters entirely into the other whom he loves, but in that other he is entirely

himself. The unselfishness of love lies in the loving person's communication of himself, not in his self-destruction". When we view this in the context of the Moltmannian concept of freedom, it seems that a notion of destructive suffering is really alien to an understanding of a free and loving relationship with the God who is good, and as existing between the free created agents of such a God. However, in the following paragraph one is informed that "Every self-communication pre-supposes the capacity for self-differentiation" (ibid). Moreover: "When we say God is love, then we mean that he is in eternity this process of self-differentiation and self-identification; a process which contains the whole pain of the negative in itself" (ibid). Why does it contain the whole pain of the negative? Some light is shed when Moltmann cites I A Dorner's words: "Love as the one that communicates does not yet find the real place of its activity in God himself, but only where there is purely free, primal giving, only where there is pure neediness in the receiver" (TKG p58: Dorner - *Die Unveranderlichkeit Gottes*, Leipzig 1883 p355). So, does God need us to suffer? Moltmann quotes from another source in order to back up his belief that for God creation means limitation, self-humiliation, and that "... creative love is always suffering love as well" (TKG p59). For Troeltsch, the creation is:

"... at the same time the subjection of God to the sufferings that follow from it... If God appoints all these sufferings, they are also sufferings for God himself... we experience suffering differently if it is not something fortuitous, but is part of the meaning of the world." (citation shortened: E Troeltsch - *Glaubenslehre. Nach den Heidelberger Vorlesungen aus den Jahren 1911 und 1912*, Munich and Leipzig 1925)

Here it seems we do need to suffer. And if God needs us to suffer in ways which produce the kind of evils that Moltmann finds unjustifiable, they can hardly be unjustifiable, for perhaps what God needs is always justifiable. Yet is this not to lose sight of the fact that unless we are prepared to revert to a terrifying arbitrariness, we are able to call

on moral criteria for all actions; such that God is not able to permit that which is unjustifiable, where what we declare as unjustifiable implies that a wholly good God does not exist? Moltmann states: "Love is a self-evident, unquestionable 'overflowing of goodness' which is therefore never open to choice at any time. We have to understand true freedom as communication of the good" (TKG p55).

The last two paragraphs of chapter two of The Trinity and the Kingdom of God present a complex view of the relationship between freedom, love and suffering. It is said that love which is creative is "ultimately suffering love because it is only through suffering that it acts creatively and redemptively for the freedom of the beloved. Freedom can only be made possible by suffering love" (TKG p60). Again, this seems to imply that love needs to see its object free, and will suffer to achieve this, but that the object of love needs to be suffering in order for love to be truly love. This appears so in the following: "The suffering of God with the world, the suffering of God from the world, and the suffering of God for the world are the highest forms of his creative love..." (ibid) But then he continues the sentence: "... which desires free fellowship with the world and free response in the world" (ibid). Is there a contradiction between love which is self-communication of the good and is entirely free, but which gives rise to unfreedom and the tyranny of the negative; or is this dichotomy overcome in the realisation that true love also expects and requires to suffer, indeed needs to suffer from others who suffer and who desire to be free?

Moltmann holds that: "... the creation of the world and human beings for freedom and fellowship is always bound up with the process of God's deliverance from the sufferings of his love" (ibid). Yes, this will

certainly be so if God can do no other than create through self-limitation, self-humiliation, and a world pervaded by nothingness; and also the case if this situation corresponds with God's need to love the recipient who has a pure neediness and a desire to be truly free. Again though, such a God is arguably perverse.

In looking at chapter four of the Trinity and the Kingdom of God, two things stand out. Moltmann's understanding of what love means, and the way in which the world suffers; either from its own freedom, or because it is unfree. If Moltmann tells us that the creation is made unfree, and suffers in order that God may love it and suffer, and free it, then certain things follow. He cannot claim that suffering has no role to play in the divine life and the plan of creation. If we accept that some of the evil that has occurred is unjustifiable, then we will also know that it has occurred in a world where suffering was inevitable. In a world free in some important sense, ultimately unjustifiable suffering as a realised possibility has implications I have gone over before. What must the consequences be for our idea of the wholly good God? If the suffering of Jesus on the cross is unjustifiable, and has as its context a world scarred by unjustifiable suffering, then it is arguable that God is without wisdom. For it is one thing to say of an individual that their suffering, at least in the context of their life here, is unjustifiable (this is problem enough). It is another to say that in the over-all picture, the destiny of creation as an organic whole, their suffering and that of others is still unjustifiable, and always will be.

On page 106, Moltmann states that: "In both the Yahwist and the Priestly Writings, 'creation in the beginning does not mean a primordial paradisaal state. It means the history that precedes salvation history."

Furthermore, echoing a familiar theme, it is an open system and has to be understood as a "... threatened world; it is surrounded by chaos. The powers of corruption reach into the midst of it, in night and the sea" (TKG p101). There will be an exodus from the world of chaos, and God will dwell in his new creation. Thus "'Behold I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. But be glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create'" (TKG p102: Isaiah 65:17ff).

How are we to think of the creative love of the trinity? Moltmann perceives that the love within the trinity is love of like for like. Still, in so being, it is not creative love. Creative love is love which "... communicates itself by overcoming its opposite, which 'gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.' (Rom 4.17)" (TKG p106).

One can see how creative love is presented with these opportunities in Moltmann's first detailed discussion of creation "inwards" (TKG p108). Drawing on the thought of Isaac Luria and Gershom Scholem, he thinks that creation involves creation of a "mystical space" within God. God is omnipresent and of infinite extension, and if the world is to exist he must withdraw his presence. Otherwise, we pre-suppose some kind of eternally co-existent space outside of God. Thus: "... every act outwards is preceded by an act inwards which makes the 'outwards possible... He creates by withdrawing himself, and because he withdraws himself. Creation in chaos and out of nothing, which is an act of power, is also a self-humiliation on God's part, a lowering of himself into his own impotence" (TKG p110). But despite the background of humiliation and of lowering into impotence involved in its creation, Moltmann can affirm

that the world is good, "just as God himself is goodness" (TKG p112). So, the world is good, and "... that is why God has pleasure in it. That is why he can expect his image, man, to respond to his creative love, so that he may not only enjoy bliss with his Son, in eternity, but may also find bliss in man, in time" (ibid).

Nevertheless, creation is imperfect. This is evident in the handling of the question of the necessity of the coming of the Son (TKG p114ff). Thus: "... the incarnation of the Son is the perfected self-communication of the triune God to his world" (TKG p116). The suffering and death of the Son is "... determined by sin and death, which pervert God's world and enslave men and women" (ibid). Moltmann also states:... the Son of God would have become man even if the human race had remained without sin" (ibid). In what way would the Son have perfected the world if he so came? There would be no sin, and without sin, according to Moltmann's traditionalism, there would be no death, and I presume, no disease. What perfecting could there be? A seal of approval perhaps. But then, would there really have been no sin? After all, we were not created fully free: this must be the area in which we are imperfect. To be free is to choose the right as a matter of course, expressing correspondence between world, God, and self. Where the realm of the Good is something with which we are definitely not in correspondence, then I would argue that it is almost inevitable that we sin, as we have in fact done. The 'torment of choice' also reflects the immediate pressures and compulsions of the realm of necessity, not only those internalised in evolution, but those confronting the flawed individual thrown into a world pervaded by nothingness: a torment persisting even when we are confronted with the light from the realm of the Good. If it is in this way that we have

sinned, and death is the wages of sin, then it should have been foreseen prior to creation that Jesus would come to suffer, and to die.

The major question remains, why is there any unjustifiable suffering when God is good, and when this goodness is relentlessly opposed to suffering and transience, and wants all to be free? If God exists in a higher realm of necessity, such as a happy and fulfilled being can only be a free one, and freedom to be what one is makes choosing good a matter of course, then it is hard to understand why he creates a realm of necessity where there is only 'partial freedom' (a difficult concept), unless there is some necessity and justification for doing so: such as those commonly advanced in theodicy concerning growth of personality and education in the exercise of free will; a justification more sustainable than the belief that there was chaos mixed up in things, by necessity, but eventually, after much unjustifiable suffering all will be liberated. If I create a new species of microbe, and in order to do so, have to make genetic changes which mean the product will, unknown to me, be unstable, sometimes pestilential, such that it causes me to wish that I had never made it, then as a human being, it is possible that I be excused if this development was not reasonably foreseeable. If God has to create by a certain withdrawal, and this means that creation is permeated by nothingness, and the consequences are such that God felt it would have been better not to create, then he can't have created this: because God knows how things go, and he will presumably only create where it is worth creating; where a world truly expresses such goods as freedom and love and joy (in other words, there are some worlds which because of their suffering, it would be impossible for God to instantiate). If God confronts unjustifiable evil, and still thinks that it was worth

creating, then this surely cannot be unjustifiable evil. There must be an ultimate justice in the way God acts to any being.

If in intention the incarnation precedes the creation of the world (TKG p117), then God knows what a finite image yet perfect image of God is like, and this makes one wonder why human beings have to suffer unjustifiable evils prior to the instantiation of this image in the form of the Son. For instance: "The Son is the *image* of God for which God destines human beings... That is why the initial creation is open: it waits for the appearance 'of man', of true man, the person corresponding to God, God's image" (ibid). This raises the question, which I cannot pursue here; if we are not human now, and only Christ is in this world, but he is then transformed, are the incarnate Christ and the resurrected Christ representative of two types of true humanity? Is the mortal perfect Christ not inevitably destroyed by the imperfect mortals, for whose condition God is however responsible? However, if Jesus was really meant to be immortal, but since 'we' sinned, and the wages of sin is death, he took on finite human form as mortal, then is it not the case that he himself could have sinned if he had been in our place on earth? What special advantage would he have: which would mean that we, as deficient were not fully culpable, and hence not deserving of 'the wages of sin'? To continue this to a *reductio ad absurdum*, if we had been meant to be immortal, yet of this earth, were we to be celibate: for surely, as immortal, we would be a species whose reproduction would inevitably destroy the balance of nature? (or perhaps reproduction would occur at multi-millennial intervals). If we were meant to be mortal, has God changed his mind about the benefits? Also, if mortality is connected to the possibility of unjustified evil (such as the death of the innocent child), then it should never have been an ingredient of creation; one

where imperfect agents could resolve to kill or love one another, depending on situation, necessity, temperament, state of mental health, and so on.

However, there are more immediate issues. Moltman states: "God becomes the God who identifies himself with men and women to the point of death and beyond" (TKG p118). Why? :

"In the incarnation of the Son the triune God enters into the limited finite situation. Not only does he enter into this state of being man; he accepts and adopts it himself, making it part of his own eternal life. He becomes *the human God*.. If this is the meaning... then God's self-humiliation is completed and perfected in the passion and death of Jesus the Son. Here too an indwelling significance is perceptible: God does not merely enter into the finitude of men and women; he enters into the situation of their sin and God-forsakenness as well. He does not merely enter into this situation; he also accepts and adopts it himself." (TKG p118-19)

Yet there must still be doubts as to why they die, and why they have been so utterly god-forsaken. The Holy Spirit is well able to render things intransient: "The eschatological work of the Holy Spirit is physical resurrection, physical transfiguration, and transformation of the physical form of existence" (TKG p122). Still, it is from the transfigured humanity of Christ that the Spirit proceeds, and it is the *eschatological* work of the Spirit. God appears to become the human God as part of a drama for which he is responsible as set designer, writer, and chief protagonist. It is still hard to see how this can be the case without full responsibility for permission of unjustifiable evil falling on God, with the arguably inevitable consequences. The following passage is an important statement which summarises Moltmann's trinitarian thinking in its relationship to creation, in picture mode:

"If we want to describe in pictorial terms the two orders of the Trinity which are to be found in the biblical testimony, we can say: In the first order the divine Trinity throws itself open in the sending of the Spirit. It is open for the world, open for time, open for the renewal and unification of the whole creation. In the second order the movement is reversed: in the transfiguration of the world through the Spirit all men turn to God and, moved by the Spirit, come

to the Father through Christ the Son. In the glorification of the Spirit, world and times, people and things are gathered to the Father in order to become his world." (TKG p127)

We could perhaps, by way of a counter image, call this the 'boomerang effect'. The original agent, flooded by lamplight, hurls the boomerang into outer darkness; but it returns, for that is the way the boomerang is constructed, things were meant to go, energies, dynamics, various factors, dictating it. Except here, God somehow opens up this darkness within himself, and the return of the boomerang is not a feat for strangers, or for personal amusement, but the key to "the laughter of the universe" (TKG p128). The darkness too, through which creation ploughs, has a profounder quality: the unjustifiable god-forsakenness of the universe, and all that ensues.

For some, the problem will remain that Moltmann's picture is a theological 'picture' or 'image', and that attempts to cognize what it presents run aground on a certain *prima facie* invulnerability to critique. Since, evidently, God does want to relate to human beings, and has put a lot of himself into creation, there are arguably though, limits to how circumspect one can be, if one wants to make any meaningful images at all. Perhaps God is beyond comprehension, or what he wants us to know is so. But this latter supposition would be unsustainable. And a God who didn't want us to glean anything about what he is about in the cosmos, would be of no particular interest. Except, does he have something to hide? Are there then, since we make rather a lot of them, right and wrong images, and how do we discriminate, even tentatively? In particular there is the issue of analysis of the kind frequently found in theodicy debate. It may be illegitimate to take apart theological images and pictures in this way. I will discuss this in chapter nine.

I move now to look at Moltmann's thought on a trinitarian doctrine of freedom (TKG p212). This is distinctly processual (and in this sense somewhat resembles an Irenaean approach), despite what he says, and would provide a sufficient explanation of why, on the way to the kingdom of freedom, there is suffering (even if not how it is compatible with God's being wholly good - given Moltmann's view that creation incurs unjustifiable suffering). First, we see that God creates the world, and that it suffers through self-destructiveness (TKG p212-13). But God is patient, and: "This constitutes the freedom of created things and preserves for them the necessary space in which to live" (ibid). Then comes the Kingdom of the Son, which liberates people from self-destructiveness, followed by the new creation which brings new powers and energies. With these, "people become God's dwelling and his home" (TKG p213). This new creation, crucially for this world, "... gives liberty its bearings and fills it with infinite hope" (ibid).

Is it implied in this that we are presently unfree? It seems that we are able to exercise free choice, that we await our free choice potential being given direction (this raises issues such as; is free choice for Moltmann an expression of what we are; if this is the case, why does it require an external marker to give it direction? But Moltmann seems to value the commitment implied in the "torment of choice", as if this cancels the negatives of ontological deficiency and moral evil). Moltmann gives us a three-stage history of freedom, which is not meant to be taken as more than a description of "... stages and transitions which are always present in the experience of freedom" (TKG p214). Firstly, people exist in a realm of necessity, the world of nature. They attempt to free themselves from necessity and to achieve power over nature. However, "... the actual acquiring of power does not as yet determine

whether it will be used for good or evil, constructively or destructively" (ibid). Secondly, they exist in a world of choice. Moltmann refers again to the proverb which goes "The person who chooses has the torment of choice" (ibid). "To do what is good as a matter of course is not yet a characteristic of the realm of freedom between the liberation from necessity and the striving for the good. Consequently the realm of freedom has to be interpreted as the history of freedom, the struggle for freedom, the process of freedom" (TKG p214). People are able to overcome this torment by reference to the "... realm of good, beyond necessity and freedom" (ibid). The position (Kantian) is summarised:

"The realm of the Good means the place from which moral purposes and values shine into the realm of freedom, so that freedom may be used properly - that is to say, for life's preservation and not for its destruction. Freedom's goal cannot be the mere increase of freedom."
(TKG p213-14)

There are thus, initially, two sides to freedom: "the liberation from compulsion and necessity, and the striving for the realization of the Good" (TKG p214). So what exactly is the realm of the Good? For Moltmann it is "... freedom in its own moral world, the world that is in correspondence with itself" (ibid). This then, it would appear, cannot be a world of necessity such as renders food acquisition vital, and death ultimately inescapable, with all the compulsions, absence of meaning, and dread of nothingness which are concomitant. The realm of the Good, it is said, is "... no longer... this ambiguous world in which freedom becomes the torment of choice; it must be that unequivocal world in which freedom consists of joy in the Good and in doing what is right simply as a matter of course" (ibid).

The argument becomes obscure. He says that we always live in transition from necessity to freedom, and from freedom to "free practice of what is good" (ibid). The main problem is embodied in the statement:

"The more power mankind acquires over nature, the more dangerous the human history of freedom becomes, and the more urgent the orientation towards the realm of the Good. Otherwise people could not acquire power over the power they have, and could not make free use of their liberty." (ibid)

In looking at the account of the realms of necessity, freedom, and the good, I wonder why we are not already orientated upon the Good, as something whose choice is merely a "matter of course" - for the evil stemming from the freedom of the "torment of choice", is frequently unjustifiable. It seems that an ontological deficiency has played its part, inextricable from the distortions introduced into human behaviour by the realm of necessity, over which we, as threatened beings have striven to exercise power. I think that a deeper analysis of our ontology, and of what exactly the realm of necessity involves is required, if we are as unsure and divided as is held to be the case. Moltmann goes on to present an analysis of freedom as having three tendencies (TKG p214ff). That of feudal lordship; that of liberal individualism; and that of community.

Freedom as lordship is dominating and subjugating of others. Bourgeois individualism considers every person as merely a limitation upon my freedom. The freedom of community is that where we become free when we are open for others and vice versa. Now, although Moltmann is keen to emphasise that these are ever-present strata of freedom, as with his final model, servanthood, children, friend (TKG p221), they do of course reflect dominant realities for individuals or groups of individuals. Take feudal society. It has its origins in a static agrarian system. Why are people agriculturalists rather than nomadic pastoralists or hunters? It

tends to allow settlement and stability, and perhaps primarily, to provide a reliable if hard-gotten supply of food (also, an agrarian society once entrenched is one where it is difficult to be a nomad; aspect of the realm of necessity). The kind of issues confronted by such a society are of the kind, 'will we get enough to eat this harvest; who will protect us against the ruthless nomadic war-bands who are moving to attack from across the Jordan - who fling children against the walls of our captured towns?' There are thus, perhaps not suprisingly, stratified and organized societies within which there are clear lines of obligation and responsibility, higher and lesser status. If we follow Moltmann, we can also say that the kind of society that is feudal is one manifesting many aspects of the realm of necessity found in all ages; from fear of slow or violent death, to the compulsions which he has spoken of as coming from the 'death-urge'.

This situation has arisen in the realm of necessity. It would not do so in the realm of the Good. Moltmann portrays the danger in our world as being in our gaining power over creation, and being faced with choice which we might misuse. Thus: "The more power mankind acquires over nature, the more dangerous the history of human freedom becomes" (TKG p214). Why might we misuse it? Arguably the real danger-point lay in God's creating a world of necessity, which was at the same time a world of choice; which included such phenomena as disease; greater social stratification the more complex and large the society; competitiveness; mortality; appropriation of territory. Exercising power (individual power, and the power of societies or states) in such a world is not a neutral activity, but involves compromise, loss of individual control, and dominance over human and non-human resources. The realm of necessity and the campaign to survive within it as finite creatures, takes its

toll. Moltmann holds that the realm of the Good projects its light into the world, so that freedom of choice is exercised by beings able to orientate themselves on the good. And yet, they do this in the context of the realm of necessity, and as having evolved within it. They are its children. Given the way he has characterised the creation, it is as if the light shines into a darkened cave, beckoning a race of blinded troglodytes.

Moltmann tries to overcome the inevitable impression of a history of being in three major installments; from the instinctual, to the conscious decision-making conditioned by the often dark forces of the realm of necessity, to the movement towards the realm of the good - by focussing on a single abstract model of human consciousness and experience. What it represents is not only a possible model of consciousness, but an actual history of unfreedom and unjustifiable suffering, and of the veritable absence of God. It is stated in the concluding paragraph of The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, that:

"... freedom means the unhindered participation in the eternal life of the triune God... when we think of freedom we may surely say: 'Our hearts are captive until they become free in the glory of the triune God.'" (TKG p22)

It is also said:

"Freedom itself is indivisible and all-comprehensive. That is why every partial freedom presses forwards to total freedom and to the freedom of the whole creation." (ibid)

It is quite difficult to see what justification there can be for creating an at best only partially free creation. For it is this creation which has generated such horrors as Moltmann terms unjustifiable. Still, whilst denying a processual dimension in the history of creation and suffering, he is able to tolerate the fact that it is within God's power to create a world which is free. Was it always so? Is this not only an

eschatological possibility? We are back with the question of process. If it was always possible to create finite beings who would rejoice in the good and always choose the Good, without this being an imposition of freedom, then the God who creates a partially free world leading to great horrors, without their being justifiable, cannot be wholly good and perfectly just. Even where we are opting for the processual interpretation, it is evident that if the realm of the Good lies at God's core, it is deeply problematic that the existence of this source of ultimate values which shines into our imperfect hoping world is by normal definition incompatible with what is perceived by Moltmann as the occurrence (permittance) of (by any terms) unjustifiable outrages: whether the great earthquake which annihilates multitudes of partial images of God; or any one of numerous genocides, casual murders; or even the death of a single innocent child.

I shall conclude discussion of Moltmann's key texts by looking at the theology of creation contained in God in Creation.

CHAPTER EIGHT

In God in Creation (1985), Moltmann reflects on a great range of issues, from the idea of the Sabbath - the Feast of Creation, concepts of space and infinity, and the question of Marxism and the degradation of nature, to what would constitute a truly adequate definition of human health. In this discussion, I shall focus on limited but crucial areas: those of the origins and nature of suffering, and additionally, how Moltmann's views on the problem of evil in this book compare with his earlier statements, and what any differences might suggest.¹

A theology which addresses, often with great insight and passion, issues such as the ecological crisis, life in health and sickness, and which embraces the evolutionary model of development is one which almost inevitably has to face questions of innocent suffering, unfreedom, and mortality. But when Moltmann says, "'All's well that end's well'" (GC p28: GS p290: "*Ende gut - alles gut*"), then the theodicy issue seems to be about to receive a suprisingly un-Moltmannian treatment. Indeed, looking at God in Creation, it appears that Moltmann has opted for a clearly processual model of the world (I mean one where reality grows from one 'shape' into another in a necessary and constructive manner). He writes:

"The famous image with which Hegel describes the nature of philosophy can very well be applied to the Sabbath: 'As the thought of the world, it does not appear until reality has completed its formative process, and made itself ready... The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering.'" (GC p288: Pref. to Philosophy of Right)

Without wanting to be repetitive, it can be argued that the idea of a formative process would mean that if God is wholly good and acts freely in full expression of the divine nature, then we should be able to take

any particular moment of the process, and see in this, related to the overall picture, the manifestation of the divine intention of loving creativity, and the divine repugnance at evil which cannot contribute towards any worthwhile good. One would suppose that any given feature of an unfolding and evolutionary movement such as Moltmann talks of, reflects the creator's intention: there is no necessity to discern either a specifically Hegelian logic of movement, nor to provide a detailed account of causation behind any series of events and possibilities, going back to the instant of creation.

In order to re-clarify the theodicy issues at stake in God in Creation, I would like to take a second look at the idea that unjustifiable evil might not be incompatible with the existence of a wholly good, just, creator God, creating *ex nihilo*. What, it might be said, if he permits all the evils that arises in the world, including those which are unjustifiable, but not the evils that might arise in another world, which he would consider to be worse in some decisive fashion? Why worse? Arguably because they would outweigh any goods with which their possibility may be connected. Or is it not just that they are intrinsically more evil? Perhaps any talk of worse or less bad implies a grading of suffering in terms of injustice, or in sheer pain and anguish. Taking the first point. The more innocent the greater the injustice, especially when the suffering is greater. If we abandon this model of justice/injustice (where apparently justice is absence of suffering for those who are good and who are loved by God), it is difficult to see what else we have to go on in describing degrees of suffering apart from sheer extremes of physical or psychological degradation. That of course, is still a miserable though hardly satisfactory possibility. Perhaps that was why in The Trinity and the Kingdom of God, Moltmann said that there

was no suffering which wasn't innocent suffering: even if, by implication, there was no commitment to the notion of justifiable suffering (what are the ultimate implications of this for responsibility in an embodied world?), the actual experience of suffering by innocent beings was not to be condoned. Why? It could be held that there are, outright, certain things which no creature ought to experience. However, this is extremely problematic. Quite obviously for instance, every creature currently suffers death, which, if 'innocent suffering' is to convey any sense, over and above statements of conjunction but not of causal relationship, such as 'all creatures who suffer are fluffy', and if Moltmann really sees mortality as bad, then that means that God is perverse. Or is there some reason why all things die (or might die), compatible with God's being wholly good? Even if we want to rid ourselves of the concept of just and unjust suffering, the apparent fact that animal and human suffering can be classed as great evil, is of a depth impossible to find a sufficiently worthwhile purpose for, is upsetting. Yet to say this is to come right back to the notion of balancing goods and evils, and of rationalising evil. I think this may be a strong tendency because although people may not be particularly interested in elaborating ideas of just suffering/punishment, they are perhaps interested in the idea that generally, evils are ultimately justifiable in the constructive sense that their occurrence is not unrelated to otherwise unobtainable and worthwhile goods (this means however that whilst we recognise that people do not always get what they 'deserve' in terms of reaping 'just deserts' in any very obvious way, this possibility is balanced by the good of the possibility of realisation of ourselves and of others in free decision and genuine responsibility). The alternative, that they do not fit into any framework of justifiability/unjustifiability is almost unbearable. Terrible things

happen: but is this as injustice not an illusion? If we take great and nauseating pain such as might be experienced in some terminal illness (perhaps more frequently the case in the 'developing' world) out of the framework which says life, despite all its problems is worthwhile, and suffering, or its possibility, cannot be separated out from the possibilities for good in existence, then we are left with the following choices. The suffering in life is the cost that is paid, or an arbitrary and senseless attrition. The first option is different from the idea of justifiable suffering in the traditional understanding. Suffering is seen as unrelated to benefits: the cost extracted from any individual is not necessarily related to benefits in their own life, but to the species as a whole. Suffering can then be seen as a charge exacted for a notional gain to the individual - the individual as tied with the species. Here we have the balancing notion again. But it is arguably better to keep the idea of justification at a level which avoids individual versus species. The goods which arise from the possibilities for evil and suffering are worthwhile for all. I think that where we say that God is wholly good and perfectly just, if we hold that one individuals suffering was not, or will not be ultimately justified, then no number of connections to the general possibilities for humanity will make it possible to avoid saying that God would have been better to have refrained from creating *anything*. My free choice yesterday has implications which I must accept today: someone suffers as a consequence of my action. But if I believe in free will as a great and worthwhile good allowing moral responsibility, that suffering should not distress me as the exercise of free will, only as the wrong exercise of free-will. Of course there are difficulties on the topic of human ability to forecast consequences, and there are other difficult problems, but here is not the place to discuss them. If we decide that given the things that happen, free will is not worthwhile,

that there are unjustifiable moral evils, then there are drastic entailments. If Moltmann does talk of unjustifiable suffering, this, again if it is to mean anything significant, must imply that there is suffering which not only is not justifiable, but in so being, over and above any kind of word-play, is a very bad thing: and it is especially bad if all who suffer are innocent. Could there be justifiable suffering? I would argue that if there could be no justifiable suffering, in the sense of its being causally connected with conditions for the possibility of obtaining otherwise unobtainable and worthwhile goods, there could be little to say for the God who has created the world. Where an earthquake kills 'innocent people' and causes 'unjustifiable suffering', we may attempt to justify God the creator as permitting this kind of event by reference to all the connected good things of the earth (together, even if we feel that good predominates, they do not of course prove that there is a moral agent at work in the world). But is human life, or the experience within it, calculable in the way that we normally seem to conceive possible for all other life? If we think not, then the creator of such an environment cannot be the kind of God who is deeply perturbed by innocent suffering which is incalculably unjustifiable. If he was wholly good, he would not of course permit such innocent suffering. I shall of course return to this topic.

I will start my discussion of God in Creation by looking at chapter four (p72ff). I do so in order to see in what way Moltmann has developed his thinking on divine freedom, purpose in creation, the *nihil*, and humiliation. After this, there is an attempt to draw a picture of how Moltmann views creation in its present inadequacy, and in its expression of what is good. Meeting this second objective will require a culling of material from a number of chapters.

It is stated in the opening section of chapter four, that "... the divine creativity has no conditions or premises. Creation is something absolutely new" (GC p73). God did not create arbitrarily (GC p75). God created out of his love (ibid), his decision being a disclosure of the divine life (GC p85). Thus:

"In his love God can choose; but he chooses only that which corresponds to his essential goodness, in order to communicate that goodness as his creation and in his creation. God's almighty power is demonstrated only inasmuch as all the operations of that power are determined by his eternal nature itself. God therefore does what for him is axiomatic - what is divine... This excludes all forms of duress." (GC p76)

Moltmann then puts emphasis on the idea of 'Nothingness'. God creates out of nothing (as *ex nihilo*), but this nothing is not merely the absence of something. It appears to be endowed with a destructive and de-stabilising potential. This is the power of the *nihil*:

"God makes room for his creation by withdrawing his presence. What comes into being is a *nihil* which does not contain the negation of creaturely being (since creation is not yet existent), but which represents the partial negation of the divine Being, inasmuch as God is not yet Creator. The space which comes into being and is set free by God's self-limitation is a literally God-forsaken space. The nihil in which God creates his creation is God-forsakenness, hell, absolute death, and it is against the threat of this that he maintains his creation in life." (GCp87-88)

So, absence of God implies god-forsakenness. The nothingness which has to be made before creation has a special cause. In "... a doctrine of Nothingness a distinction has to be made between the non-being of a creature, the non-being of creation, and the non-being of the Creator. It is only in connection with the last that of these that we can talk about Nothingness" (GC p88). Nothingness has its effect after we isolate ourselves in sin. For then: "Creation is therefore threatened, not merely by its own non-being, but also by the non-being of God its Creator - that is to say, by Nothingness itself" (ibid). I do not see that how this happens is ever specified. If for instance, mortality is to be described as a consequence of human sin, but sin as letting in the external power

of nothingness, then the introduction of fiendish negativity into the world in this way is problematic: rather like a person's making a moderately reprehensible mistake in behaviour in a foreign land, and finding that they have unexpectedly precipitated a war. Who are they to know that the country is simmering, that the calm is a fragile surface to great destructive forces? Except, in this case, the land is their own land, and self-isolation threatens an unsuspected vengeance across the generations. Perhaps vengeance is too strong a word: it may be that God would prefer that Nothingness as an alien power have no such massive effect on his world. Was God forced to make the world the way it was?

Some of the criticisms which Hick made of Barth's '*das Nichtige*' throw light on problems of the Moltmannian doctrine of the *nihil*² (See the discussion in Evil and the God of Love p143ff). Does this *nihil*, as genuinely opposed to God, arise as something unavoidable, which God doesn't want, but has to accept if he is to create? If this is so, then Moltmann may be contradicting his position on God's power - where he has stated for example, that: "God's almighty power is demonstrated only inasmuch as all the operations of that power are determined by his eternal nature itself" (GC p76). This entails that what God does is entirely compatible with his nature, as say, wholly good. Of course, that doesn't mean that God can avoid everything he might want to avoid (miscarriages, world-wars...), but it implies that where this question of power arises, the resultant possibilities for evil need to be seen as balanced, or more than balanced, by worthwhile good.

There is a further aspect. It is not clear that God does want to avoid the possible involvement of the *nihil* (see also EGL p145). The *nihil* is embroiled in the way things go in such a manner that it is hard to be

sure that if God could have created without this limitation, he would have chosen to do so. For instance: "If life is lived in embodiment and if it is committed in its earthly context, it becomes vulnerable and mortal. But because it is spent, it brings fruit. The death which this life experiences is a fruitful and therefore a meaningful death" (GC p269). I feel that in the reference to the image of the owl of Minerva, Moltmann indicates that such effect as 'Nothingness' has, is within the parameters of the formative process of reality. But taken against the general and problematic trend to dismiss theodicy, I do not think that this kind of statement is sufficient to divert critical attention. It also points to the danger of self-contradiction.

One line of enquiry when looking at Moltmann's doctrine of Nothingness, is to ask to what extent he commits himself to a 'likely' account, or actually feels he is making, to use Hick's words (on Barth's 'nothingness'), a contribution to 'the science of theology'. The latter understanding seems in order, even if he begins the discussion in terms of going more deeply into 'an idea'. It is shortly afterwards stated:

"Theologians have made [the]... distinction between God's 'inward' and his 'outward' aspect so much a matter of course that no one has even asked the critical question: can the omnipotent God have an 'outward' aspect at all? If we assume an *extra Deum*, does this not set god a limit? ... In order to create a world 'outside' himself, the infinite God must have made room beforehand for a finitude in himself." (GC p86)

Perhaps this is so, but Moltmann's deductions are of a kind open to opposition as incoherent. He holds, as I previously noted, that God withdraws and creates a "literally God-forsaken space" (GC p87). It is stated:

"The character of the negative that threatens it [creation] goes beyond creation itself. This is what constitutes its demonic power. Nothingness contradicts, not merely creation, but God too..." (GC p88)

In order for this to be so, the space of creation has to be viewed in the

way Moltmann proposes. It appears to be assumed that God has to evacuate his presence, and that there is an unavoidable underlying incompatibility or hostility between creation and its living-space (GC p87-88). If we accept that the death of a single innocent child is unjustifiable, and we can argue strongly that the potentially deadly antagonism between creation and the void has a major part to play, and is probably the key factor in converting human isolation to death and meaninglessness (see below), then the line of responsibility goes back to the God who creates, and the question of justification is less able to be avoided than ever.

There are other perhaps less problematic models for creation. There is arguably no reason to believe that God couldn't create space, and create the universe, simultaneously.³ Perhaps even this duality is misleading. The universe is multi-dimensional. The instantaneous creation of the infant universe (and simultaneously of its particular dimensions), and opening up of God to receive it need not imply the creation of a void into which the universe is inserted.

The way in which Moltmann suggests that acts of human sinfulness allow Nothingness to surge up, seems to say that a negativity 'pervades' the interstices of reality itself, ready to destroy: "... by yielding up the Son to death in God-forsakenness on the cross, and by surrendering him to hell, the eternal God enters the Nothingness out of which he created the world... He pervades the space of God-forsakenness with his presence" (GC p91). And: "On the level of the life processes, perversions... continually occur - perversions of constructive potentialities into destructive ones... Because these are forces which do not belong to the human sphere, but which yet have a destructive effect on that sphere, we

talk about demonic forces... It is these dimensions, transcending human beings and the earth, that are meant by the symbols of 'the fall of angels' and 'the rule of Satan'" (GC p169). This presence of the alien within creation, as if the latter were some permeable body in the void, strengthens the impression that Nothingness is not only the space for creation, but from the beginning qualifies the integrity of creation to an unacceptable degree. We could alternatively speak of the universe as growing within God as he makes space for it: not within hell, or absolute death (GC p91), but the space which is part of creation, and which has its source in the love of God, in his grace. God then makes way for this life-giving space, and not for anything else.

We could say that an infinite *nihil* within God threatens to eliminate God. Further, if we think of a finite universe within either an infinite or finite *nihil*, in the former instance, creation is surrounded by an infinitely large hell, arguably superfluous (although God may have his reasons, so long as this state of affairs does not give rise to unjustifiable evils). In the latter instance, the *nihil* is negated by creation if the two are co-terminous. Arguably, it is not really plausible to assume that God makes the *nihil* too large through bad design (hence perhaps causing unnecessary added suffering). Surely he only needs to contract as much as needs be, in letting the divine energy and love flow into an expanding life-giving space with its own integrity: there being no need to open up an inter-mediate zone of absolute death. Of course though, this an area of speculation, and God, as noted, may make the *nihil* as large as he wishes, even if it does introduce the possibility of a special suffering, but again, with the condition on unjustifiable evil attached, and only with wholly good intention.

I want to move now to look at the kinds of evil Moltmann finds in the world, and how the *nihil* or other factors are involved. The following references to evil in the world of God in Creation are taken from a number of chapters.

Moltmann makes a number of important statements about evil and suffering. Chapter two, dealing with the ecological crisis, gives a picture of social dynamics which seems like a variation on J L Mackie's 'traps':

"The norms which regulate a society derive from its cultural traditions... Over a long period of history, systems of value and meaning have become very deeply rooted in the human subconscious. Changing them is painful, and usually takes a very long time. Societies which are unable fundamentally to alter their systems of value and meaning, so as to adapt themselves to the new situation, are unable to change as a whole. This means that they cannot end the destruction they are causing. On the contrary, the destruction of the natural environment which they have brought about has, in its turn, a destructive retroactive effect on the societies themselves, evoking a loss of values and crisis of meaning..... The defence measures that are undertaken can even serve to spread and deepen the crisis. (GC p24)

It is important that Moltmann is not committed to saying that we cannot learn, although this is tied to the elements of a key theodicy argument: "Only life systems that are capable of suffering are capable of surviving, because they are the only ones that are prepared to learn, and are open to change and renewal" (GC p24). Still, the problems that force us to change through suffering arise from basic tendencies, perhaps inherent in the world as it is: "In the struggle for existence [*Kampf ums Dasein*], scientific and technical progress is not used merely for the enhancement of living; it is also utilized by the political will to achieve or secure power. In terms of social reality, there is no such thing as 'value-free science'" (GC p25). Moltmann frequently refers to Francis Bacon, and is especially critical of what he sees as the exploitative theory of knowledge coming from that early modern period (GC p27).

Still, critically, whilst it is true that Europe and its civilisation have developed in a way which has unleashed great forces through technology, it is difficult to know how much is to be ascribed to the flash of inspiration which might never have been, and how much to the forces of evolving capital, means of production, consumption, demand for raw materials, involving myriads of individuals and a whole culture. It is hard to estimate to what extent the tendencies to destruction and loss of control have to do with a particular ideology or with more universal human limitations, as well as potentialities. Given that the modern world was clearly possible, and that it expresses human potential and limitation, as every other society does, the problems of our age are perhaps not best wholly identified with its ideology. Arguably, all societies express human limitations, whether in sanctioning slavery, or exploiting natural resources as far as their technology allows and compels. One of our basic problems is the limited nature of human foresight and the tendency to dominate wherever this is possible: the apparent inability of the mass society, or agglomeration of mass societies to express decisively the individual's concerns at social and environmental degradation could also be seen as an unfortunate aspect of human finitude. Moltmann's interpretation of Genesis indicates that for a long time humanity has failed to restrain forces of domination and exploitation. Why might this be so? How, in Moltmann's account, does it deviate from God's original vision?

Talking about Genesis 1:26, Moltmann views the words 'subdue the earth' as an authoritative dietary commandment, not as anything that could "lay the intellectual foundations for today's ecological crisis" (GC p29). That is, "human beings and animals alike are to live from the fruits which the earth brings forth in the forms of plants and trees. A seizure

of power over nature is not intended" (ibid). There is no indication that Moltmann does not think this command the actual ideal which God intended to see realised on earth. In the light of this it is hard to know what to make of the moral status of the carnivorous snail. I am not being flippant, since I think it clear that Moltmann thinks meat eating was unintended by God. Indeed, the disastrous way in which life has evolved is made plain when it is held that truly: "... the rule of human beings over the animals can only be a rule of peace, without any 'power over life and death.' The role which human beings are meant to play is the role of a 'justice of the peace [*Friedensrichters*]' " (p29-30). It is puzzling though that in a world where every creature is presumably naturally a vegetarian, that the peace needs to be kept. Perhaps there will be stiff competition for resources, and who is to say that some creatures will not develop a taste (as has obviously happened), for the abundance of animal food moving around?

The mystification of mortality in the world is evident on page sixty eight of God in Creation. Nature has "fallen victim" to transience and death. This seems to speak of a carelessness in God's activity. I quote the following passage in order to show the way in which Moltmann combines incompatible elements:

'Because in human beings faith brings liberation from the closed-in isolation which is sin, in nature too the isolation of the life systems can be seen as their 'bondage' to transience, and 'openness' is recognizably their living character. The human being who is closed in upon himself finds his correspondence in the nature that is sealed off and therefore dies. The person who has been opened up for a new hope for life finds his correspondence in the nature which has been thrown open for its own future. In human beings this new orientation is to be apprehended in hope; in nature it can be identified as unrest, as a drive and thrust towards higher complexity and a more prodigal fulness of life." (GC p69)

Taking death as the paradigm for failure and meaninglessness, which Moltmann generally seems to do, this great failure is nevertheless, as I

shall argue shortly, an inescapable part of the cycles of nature. For Moltmann it appears that death is countered by the drive to higher complexity, but perhaps most scientists would argue that it is the 'drive' to higher complexity which involves transience. Interestingly a counter to the theory of evolution as driving upwards to some pre-ordained higher types, and to ever greater variety has come in the recent book on the Burgess Shale, 'Wonderful Life', by Stephen Gould, Hutchinson Radius, 1989. Who knows how many antecedents have been involved in the 'drive' towards Moltmann himself? Multitudes certainly. He kicks away the ladder by which his possibility has been maintained, and without which, for evolutionary reasons, it is otherwise impossible to conceive (except perhaps that laws of heredity and chromosomal variance are illusions, and that we could all be completely different - except God decides to match us to our forbears, to give an appearance of heredity). Death is seen so often as purely negative (e.g., "The unredeemed character of the body which believers sense in themselves corresponds to the tragedy of the non-human creation, which is subject to futility. Nature has fallen victim to transience and death": GC p68). If it is so viewed, then the traditional idea that it is a consequence of sin, is attractive. For otherwise, how does one reconcile the world as it is with the God who creates? This would be an impossible position, for holding that death is a key component in producing unjustifiable evils, and perhaps one itself, is not a tenable option while we believe that God is wholly good. But imagining too that we would exist without transience in nature is incompatible with evolutionary research. Then there is the old problem that however there comes to be unjustifiable evil, this cannot be permitted to come to be by a wholly good God.

I move now to a key passage (key, where responsibility for suffering in Moltmann's theology is concerned), which introduces a number of arguable confusions in this doctrine of creation. First, creation out of nothing is described as without any prior conditions ("we can see initial creation as the divine creation that is without any prior conditions: *creatio ex nihilo*" GC p90). Then we move to "creation in history", which is "... the laborious creation of salvation out of the overcoming of disaster" (ibid). Following this is the "eschatological creation", seen as arising from the vanquishing of Nothingness: sin and death (ibid). God overcomes the Nothingness "which lies heavy over sin and death" (ibid). This raises the question is God really free from any preconditions? If so, if he did not have to create a God-forsaken primordial space, why did he do so. Consider the following statement from God in Creation:

"If God creates his creation out of nothing, if he affirms it and is faithful to it in spite of sin, and if he desires its salvation, then in the sending and surrender of his own Son he exposes himself to the annihilating Nothingness, so that he may overcome it in himself and through himself, and in that way give his creation existence, salvation and liberty.... by surrendering him to hell, the eternal God enters the Nothingness out of which he created the world. God enters that 'primordial space' which he himself conceded through his initial self-limitation... By entering into the God-forsakenness of sin and death (which is Nothingness), God overcomes it and makes it part of his eternal life: 'If I make my bed in hell, thou art there' (ps. 139.8)." (GC p91)

Immediately following is a passage I cited in chapter three, where Moltmann addresses the problem of Auschwitz and Hiroshima. If it is true that there is a negative that cannot be turned to any good, then Moltmann is back in the position that there is no justification for having created a world where such negatives arise. But as I have argued, whether God was truly free of all prior conditions or not, his being wholly good would prevent him creating such a world. It can seem as if the commitment to understanding goods and evils as somehow balanced so that the latter are

justified by the worth of the former, is extremely callous. And in the way Moltmann has spoken of all who suffer as being innocent, it appears that he is one of those who is able to reject the idea of some suffering as justified in the sense of 'just deserts', just as he is able to dismiss any slick theodicy justification of the sufferings of the victims of moral or natural evil; people or animals who have in no way 'deserved' their experience. It seems as if Moltmann is dispensing altogether with the idea that goods and evils can be balanced and productively interconnected. But as previously suggested this threatens the view that the world is a bizarre affair, where what goods are experienced are completely isolated from the general conditions which are their pre-condition, and the pre-conditions of evil and suffering. One cannot live as an evolved being, and not die.

There is no quiet village with its peaceful church, in the lee of a mountain, which is not at the same time the consequence of processes of climate and earth-forming, of evolution, which have killed multitudes, extinguished species. If the evil is to be neatly driven into a corner, and excoriated, then the talk that we should not ignore the goods with which God has blessed this finite life, should be seen as dishonest. If they are good, they are still inextricably connected with the bad. If death and suffering is considered unjustifiable, then the good, the obverse for which, indeed its *sine qua non*, is the possibility of destruction, should be re-assessed. Calling it truly good would be like relishing the tonic effect of the sun in the middle of drought and famine. If there is no connection between possibilities for good and freedom and the occurrence of natural and moral evil, then we have to ask why God has made a world where there is such evil. The evil there is cannot contribute anything, its existence is unrelated to the

possibilities for good, and having free will: in other words, it is meaningless suffering gratuitously inflicted by God. Where however, we hold that people are free, and the world is such that great and unflawed good will come from it, and that suffering or its possibility is not some alien and unrelated aspect of life, then the creative activity of God becomes more intelligible. Of course, some will argue that if God really was wholly good, then he could have created beings who would have been free and never chosen to do wrong. But where we maintain that people are free in crucial respects, and that this evidently leads to acts of evil which God must have seen the possibility of, given the evolutionary environment, then to say that the death of a single innocent child shows that the almighty kindly God does not exist, because it is a radically unjustifiable thing which has happened, does no good to the Christian case. What kind of God does exist? Perhaps one who is almighty and amoral, or who is incompetent but kindly. Given that the death of this child is intimately connected with the possibility for good or evil action by human beings, their fate has to be seen as linked with possibilities for good. For it not to wholly negate the good, as superficial, and induce a state of mind which says enjoy all the things you can, because you may die slowly you know not when; 'every dog has its day'; or the poverty of so many and the wealth of the few is just the luck of the draw, requires that the world be seen, in its good and bad aspects as a field of moral endeavour, and one in which every life and fate is tied to an understanding of this fact. Even if God weeps in agony over the fate of one child, as he should, it cannot be the anguish of the parent who says, 'why did I ever bring this child into the world with its conflicts? Everything is pointless: I should have known what might happen'.

God has brought everybody into the world, with all its and their possibilities for good and evil. Arguably the only option for the God who is not to be seen as mistaken, but rather as wholly good and wise, is that the connections serve some purpose such that ultimately, for each and every individual, their life, freedom, finitude, and suffering cannot be written off as a regrettable and tragic incident that had better never been: the latter judgement being what I believe to be involved in the idea that individuals in this world as an organic whole, suffer unjustifiably. If they had truly better never been, in the freedom and potentiality they experienced, then God is willing to create individuals, peoples, and species even, whose existence in all its wealth is not enough to counterbalance evils which are after all, derived from the same ground of possibilities as gives freedom, life, sentience. To say something is unjustified, is to make a judgement. It must be an ultimately fatal judgement in a Christian theology. For suffering is not merely questioned as justified or not in the sense of 'did I deserve that?', but in the light of the ground of its possibility as also the possibility for what are worthwhile goods, such as freedom, compassion, perhaps even sacrifice. I am not actually going to defend these latter arguments, but I think they are the arguments which have to be pursued if suffering is not to be seen as a purely gratuitous element of life in the world of the God who is wholly good.

There is a related argument which says that it is best to leave evils unexplained, and outwith the sphere of justificatory talk. For to explain is to justify, to show interconnections and reasons why something should be one way and not another. However, whilst no-one would pretend to explain all the detailed inter-connections which make up even a short span of existence, behaviour and experience, it is possible to argue that

it is necessary that there be inter-connectedness between happenings in ways such that what has happened, even if we cannot detail it, is intelligible to God. For if God is unable to comprehend the working of his creation, then he cannot claim to have created a world which in fundamental ways expresses his love: he will have no knowledge that indicates that the way the world will go is any different from the way a world created by a cruel God might go. Considering that this God will be wholly good, it would be difficult to accept that he might create a world where individuals were destroyed, with lives which could not ever justify their fates: I mean a kind of 'hard' justification, where the tragedy stands, yet the life lived, the life potential, and the freedom of action which is shared by victim and aggressor is somehow more than its equal. If we grant that this is so, then our leaving evil and suffering unexplained is not to say that it is ultimately inexplicable. A world whose course is truly inexplicable in terms of the relation of the experiences of its inhabitants to its creation by a wholly good God is a world which gives no possible indication that it has been created by such a God. As I have argued, it will be a sign that a wholly good God could not have made it, if he creates as an expression of his goodness, and if that term is intended to signify anything in particular.

Perhaps inexplicability of good and evil expresses the divine goodness and wisdom. But if that is held so, no-one is entitled to say that an evil is unjustifiable. How do they know? And if we take inexplicability seriously, we could never know if any particular good was justified either - in the sense that it is what we expect of God who is always wholly good, and who graciously and constantly relates to his people. Why something perceived as good is seen as of God, and not as the prelude to some cruel (inexplicable) 'twist of fate', if this phrase is permissible,

could not be made clear, since the common ground of possibilities for good and evil is dissolved away in the attempt to forego any balancing and inter-connectedness; such as might occur in the free will defence, or visions of responsibility, compassion, and a sense of the sometimes melancholy worth of radical finitude. In other words, a free decision to love, or an active sympathy, precisely as free and not mechanical, seen as good and related to the graciousness of God, loses its value if we fail to recognise that an essential part of this value comes from its status as free. If we understand that the flip side as it were, is the possibility of evil, then it has to be recognised that the genuine good requires this as possibility, and in the divine mind the relatedness is comprehended. I do not think I have to provide a table of some kind to show strongly that if some evils are seen as wholly unjustifiable in the deepest sense, then God is 'free' with lives other than his own, and either wicked or incompetent.

Moltmann enquires:

'Does the resurrection of the crucified Christ also bring the Nothingness of world history into the light of the resurrection? Here the experiences of Auschwitz and Hiroshima raise questions for which no answers are endurable, because they are fundamentally protests.'
(GC p91)

Protests against what? It seems as if Moltmann is protesting about the bullets, gases, the technology and human implementation of destruction, without viewing them in the context of a cruel world, one which he himself sees as pervaded by Nothingness. Ultimate responsibility for such a world lies with God. The discussion above, shows, I hope, how the idea that God's creation is divinely intelligible will mean that we can trust that the ground of possibilities which includes potential for good and horrendous action is one which is divinely comprehended. Therefore, there is some ultimate, if 'hard' justification for this ground; 'hard'

since the ways things are undoubtedly results in much suffering which cannot be tied to any abuse of responsibility on the part of the victims. I take it that the questions raised by genocides, or even the fate of individuals, are those covered in the theodicy debate. They take particular forms, and if they are protests, they are protests against God for particular reasons. They are not incoherent, unarticulated, and undemanding, but rather, specific (certainly Moltmann acknowledges that they are questions, not just exclamations).

I might expect no answer to my protest if reduced to shouting and crying in rage, or mumbling grief-stricken at the fire-ringed cone of a volcano that has just destroyed my village. If I ask some fundamental questions of the God who is said to have created the world in which there are such volcanoes, I would expect something more than a puff of smoke, a rumble, and my personal knowledge that some day the village can be rebuilt (that is, I would accept that there is some higher purpose; or attempt to propitiate the cunning and blood-thirsty volcano; or accept that there is no meaning, and that I was unlucky to live there). It is possible for people to protest at a regime, and then realise that there is no need to accept the state of affairs. One might protest in favour of a purer dictatorship of the proletariat, only to discover that things can become much clearer if one turns in an entirely different direction. This is an old problem in Moltmann. If one can ask proper questions, and expect answers, or feel that the answer should really be of a certain kind, then the idea that there can be no answer is unsatisfactory. Moltmann says: "Belief in the resurrection looks towards God at the very point where humanly speaking there is nothing to hope for and nothing to be done" (GC p92). But why is there this situation when God is wholly good, and creates without pre-conditions? And why should one believe and trust in

God when there is nothing to support the reasonableness of this move; indeed a lot against it? Moltmann also writes: "How should the Creator-out-of-nothing be diverted from his intention and his love through any devastations [*Vernichtungen*] in what he has created?" (GC p93) God evidently has a robust attitude to suffering. If it becomes clear that the 'presence' of Nothingness has a major role to play in exacerbating human isolation to the point of massive and unjustifiable annihilations, then the issue of responsibility becomes more than generator of transient protest, and one of the existence of the wholly good God. I will now look at chapter seven, as it projects a certain ambivalence towards transience and mortality. The chapter deals with the question "Why is Creation a Dual World?" It is held that a world created by God cannot be one which "... revolve[s] within itself, either in absolute or in relative completeness and self-sufficiency" (GC p163).

Earth has its foundations outside itself, in God. And "In this sense it is an 'open system'. We call the determined side of this system 'earth', the undetermined side 'heaven'" (GC p163). There is a strange dichotomy evident here. Earth has its determined nature, and its longed for openness lies outside itself. This strongly suggests that there has to be some rationale behind this state of affairs, for arguably, the less reason there is to think that earth might be its own justification, the more justification this set-up requires, especially in the light of the great suffering that occurs in this 'closed' world. Still, the relationship is presented in positive terms: "... we can call heaven the relative transcendence of earth, and earth the relative immanence of heaven" (ibid). Further clarification of the distinctions comes with the words: "If 'things visible' means the finite world, then 'things invisible' means the relatively infinite world. Men and women are God's

finite and mortal creatures. Angels are God's finite but immortal creatures" (ibid). Apparently the eschatological determination of the world towards openness means the attainment of this latter state, although Moltmann does not commit himself to a specific description of what this might be: "heaven means God's potentiality for the earth, which is unknowable and indefinable but defining" (GC p165). What would the world be without this potentiality? "It would be a world which is not open 'upwards', or open for God; it would be a world without this qualitative transcendence. A world like this would be a closed system, resting and revolving within itself" (GC p163).

Of the world that exists, it is said in a morally negative sense (i.e., not just because God is infinite), "God's potentialities are not congruent with, or absorbed by, the realities and potentialities of the earth" (GC p165).⁴ With the earth affected by Nothingness it certainly seems to require an up-grade in potentiality. And "... when 'heaven opens', this means that God's energies and potentialities appear in the visible world... What was impossible before will then become possible... A future will be opened which was hitherto closed and inaccessible" (GC p172). Can this overall situation (where there is great suffering on earth) be reconciled with what Moltmann has said shortly before:

'By determining that he will be the Creator of this world, God decides out of the whole wealth of his potentialities in favour of the potentialities which are creative, and against those that are destructive... There is no 'dark side' to God - no side where he could also be conceived of as the destroyer of his creation and of his own being as creator." (GC p168)

Problematically, it is stated in the paragraph following this that (some of this I have already cited):

'Evil is the perversion of good, the annihilation of what exists, the negation of the affirmation of life. On the level of the life processes, perversions of this kind continually occur - perversions of constructive potentialities into destructive ones. On the human level they make themselves evident as processes of separation - sin; and

isolation - death. There are apparently also perversions of the same kind in the sphere of the potencies which are intended to make the life process possible. These then hinder and destroy those life processes. Because these are forces which do not belong to the human sphere but which yet have a destructive effect on that sphere, we talk about demonic or satanic forces.... It is these dimensions, transcending human beings and the earth, that are meant by the symbols of 'the fall of the angels' and 'the rule of Satan'." (GC p169)

Are these satanic forces transcending the human sphere, sufficient to unleash the forces of Nothingness? If they are, even indirectly, through promoting the insecurity and isolation of human beings, then Moltmann is arguably in some trouble. Creation would have potential for evil beyond human control, the consequences of which in the human sphere are unjustifiable. Is the God who permits such satanic forces to pervert the fundamental processes of life, and intrude on the existence of finite fragile beings, righteous? Arguably not. What is additionally confusing is that Moltmann sees heaven as being transcended (GC p183), adding to the problems of the the dichotomy I referred to above. That is, firstly, the kind of place the earth apparently really ought to be, is a realm of being which is already open for God to create, and which he will have to create anyway, since it is not in the potentiality of the earth as it was created to evolve to such a condition. Now, heaven stands for earth's eschatological possibilities (GC p182). But heaven itself, if we are to understand it realistically, is a place of sadness. It is said: "... heaven itself weeps over an earth of blood and tears" (GC p183). And: "It is not only earth that requires a new creation, tormented as it is by suffering and pain and crying and death. Heaven requires a new creation too" (ibid). The amount of suffering and the need for radical change is disquieting. Even that which represents earths eschatological possibilities requires transformation. Earth is created without destructive potentialities, but is racked by unjustifiable suffering through the operation of satanic forces and intrusion of the power of

Nothingness, the perversion of basic life processes, and human isolation. To start with, heaven is earth transcended, as earth is heaven immanent. Heaven suffers from earth's suffering. Finally, it seems that heaven is transformed, for it is in fact a kind of intermediate staging post for the souls of the dead, who are not redeemed until a new heaven appears, an event which frees them from their suffering at the fate of the earth (ibid).

We have an interesting duality. First the duality of heaven and earth as they initially stand in immanent/transcendent relationship. It could be argued that the heaven is already flawed if earth is its devastated immanence. However that may be, it certainly becomes contaminated by the suffering of its immanent realisation. There also seems to be this wider duality. For the real heaven seems to be the one which is the first heaven itself transcended.

Moltmann argues that heaven contains the Ideas which are instantiated in the world, but that God loves this reality more than the archetypes (GC p167). The crucial question is, what if the concrete realisations of these divine ideas suffer extremely concretely, unjustifiably, and in a world from the first characterised by a predisposition to engender such suffering? If it were held that there was a justification for the evil that occurs, then the notion that heaven provides an horizon towards which creation moves, would be more plausible. But that there is no justification, and that the horizon is darkened by the suffering of earth, requiring a complete renewal of earth and horizon, is highly problematic. First, because associate with the claim that there is unjustifiable evil, arguably incompatible with the idea that God is in fact wholly good and perfectly just. Second, because if earth is the

immanence of heaven, then heaven must contain many dark and problematic ideas. Blake put a variation of this issue:

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame they fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies,
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

(William Blake: Songs of Innocence and Experience
No.42 'The Tyger': OUP 1970)

I now move to our last discussion of material in God in Creation, dealing as it does with evolution (chapter eight "The Evolution of Creation"). I think I have shown the reasons why I think that Moltmann cannot dismiss theodicy, describe many evils as unjustifiable. Can Moltmann's theology stand as coherent when the justification of suffering is denounced because it is so horrible as to be beyond rationalisation, and also portrayed as practically inescapable for all creatures who exist in the world God decided to make: where God is righteous in the sense that reconciling suffering with his standards of justice and love is an impossible task? I do not think so. Surprisingly though, In his attitudes

to evolution, Moltmann now shows an ability to minimise the suffering inherent in its nature. If evolution is an abundant process which maintains life, and is only corrupted by satanic forces, Nothingness, and human isolation, then perhaps the transience and suffering of life, so reviled by Moltmann, will not be so much of a problem (though there is always the fundamental issue of the implications for belief in a wholly good God of saying that even the smallest amount of suffering is ultimately unjustifiable). But if Moltmann shows an optimistic and even naive view of the world and its fundamental processes, he is perhaps obscuring the fact that the world God has made, and the way he has made it, is quite capable of generating an amount of suffering which would, without any human sinfulness staining an original purity, be more than enough to satisfy his criteria of unjustifiable suffering.

In his account of creation it is noted how, "So that they may reproduce themselves, human beings are given bi-sexuality and fertility. On this the Creator confers his blessing: 'be fruitful and multiply' (Gen. 1.28)" (GC p188). Transience is however noted to be a "curse" (GC p189). It seems to many that transience is indeed the fate of any life form, but always has been. It appears as a pre-condition of anything's having developed to a level of complexity, and it would be difficult to imagine a world where all animal, bird, fish, and insect ancestors are alive. Immortality is not an intelligible, or workable 'strategy', for any species in finite world. Clearly a limited life-span and the ability to reproduce have been the key techniques for successful organic existence on this planet.

Moltmann sees that human beings wish to reproduce themselves, and that God blesses this (see also GC p247). The following argument follows the

implications of Moltmann's position closely. We must first accept that however positive Moltmann sounds about evolution, he is strongly committed to the belief that death is a phenomenon which stands in contradiction to God's righteousness. Death was not something, we can gather, which characterised the world of life from the beginning; it is a consequence of sin. If this is to be at all a defensible position, we must say that human beings were responsible beings when they sinned, and thus took on the burden of death. To push death back into the mists of pre-sentience, to some primitive transgression, only makes the idea of universal mortality as the result of mis-behaviour more morally repulsive than some would argue it already is. The other components of the case are Moltmann's welcoming affirmation of the primordial divine wish that human beings should multiply, and the apparent acceptance of evolutionary time scales and processes. One can now follow through with a necessary *reductio ad absurdum*.

It takes only a simple calculation to show that starting with a balanced population of 1000 immortal but fertile individuals in the stage before full sentience and responsibility could be credited, granting the generous concession that each couple has only two children every fifty years, that in a mere 1750 years the population would have reached 8601 billion. This is excluding the problem of immortal mice, dogs, midges, or trees. I think that Moltmann gives a wholly unacceptable account of one of the key features of creation. His vision has several problems. If we were intended to be immortal and fertile, then an incredible amount of suffering would have occurred. It is hard to see how anything complex could have evolved in the first place, as tendencies to natural selection would be swamped. Over-population would stretch natural resources to breaking point. In other words, these factors would make the evolved

existence of highly developed and at all culpable human beings impossible.

We are forced to accept the fact that death is an unavoidable feature of life on earth. It cannot be made our responsibility. Responsibility lies with God. We cannot say that God abhors what he himself has directly brought to be. But given his optimistic view of evolution as apparently not requiring transience in the form of annihilation, Moltmann is able to write:

"... we can make the generalization that the more a life system is capable of bearing strain, the stronger and more capable of survival it shows itself to be. It absorbs hostile impulses and assimilates them productively, without destroying the enemy or itself. In so doing, it itself becomes richer and more flexible. For the more an open life system is able to suffer, the more it is able to learn."
(GC p210)

One could perhaps respond to this with the fate of the dinosaurs.⁵ The unreality of this account of life is manifested in the attitude to food consumption. Using the Genesis accounts, Moltmann, as I have already noted, genuinely concludes that human diet is to be exclusively vegetarian. And "The beasts are also to eat only vegetarian food" (GC p224). Clearly a further catastrophe has happened in the course of realising the intention in creating. The perverted development of the world, including plants that eat flesh, and mass extinctions, speaks of great negligence on the part of God. Animals are eaten by people. Animals also eat each other. Dietary catastrophe. One might also ask on what moral grounds it is forbidden to eat krill or worms, but acceptable for animals to chew the bark off, and kill, an ancient and beautiful tree. Moltmann's account of evolution, over and above the general problems associated with holding that evil is unjustifiable, adds to his difficulties. For I suppose it is possible that theodacists might agree that there are some evils which could be ultimately unjustifiable. The

only problem is, that if they are real possibilities in this world, God may well be considered a careless and flawed God. Strangely, Moltmann actually gives an account of how such unjustifiable suffering has to be accepted as a divine responsibility. Perhaps such suffering, if it were entirely mysterious, out of God's hands, would allow a genuine hope for an eschatological homecoming as the guests of the God who is wholly good (though such a God would not be that of Christian faith). I think that if we follow Moltmann's particular analysis, there is clear evidence that God has to be the instigator and responsible agent behind much, and indirectly, all, of the unjust suffering that is held to exist. In this sense, answers to the theodicy protests are available, and in regard to this theology at least, they are arguably fatal to the idea that God is wholly good.

I want to end by looking very briefly at a statement in chapter three of God in Creation. It goes to the heart of the evolutionary problem. Moltmann first makes an assertion which must eventually call into question his belief that our mortality is evil, a consequence of sin, and a human responsibility: "In physical terms, believers are bound together in a common destiny with the whole world and all earthly creatures. So what they experience in their own body applies to all other created things" (GC p68). Yet there is also a desire to isolate the cause of the human condition: "Nature has fallen victim to transience and death. It has not fallen through its own sin, like human beings... a sadness lies over nature which is the expression of its tragic fate and its messianic yearning. It is enslaved and wishes to be free..." (ibid). But it is necessary to say that humanity exists because of transience, and not despite it. If mortality has a moral origin, then the death of a single innocent, conceived of as the now biologically determined fate of

individuals who cannot be culpable for this fact, and as utterly unjustifiable in Moltmann's own thought, is arguably sufficient to topple God. Further though, if the accidental or humanly pre-meditated death of an innocent is unjustifiable, so is the universal taking away of life by the Creator - if Moltmann wishes to retain his valuation of the moral enormity of death and dying, but opt for a more conventional notion of evolution and mortality. The fact that it seems likely that God intended that human beings should die, will of course mean that justificatory arguments be taken seriously. There is nothing divinely unintended in the congenital deformity or the defective blood cell: long before human beings could be themselves culpable, the Creator was alone responsible. In cases of human responsibility it is normal to offer compensation (for that which cannot be compensated for). With God an ultimate justification may arguably be expected, or understood to exist, even if as yet not explicable.

CHAPTER NINE

There are three areas which I wish to discuss in this chapter. The first is the openness of Moltmann's theology to critical analysis. There are, I think, two aspects to this question. [1] The issue of the general immunity of theological concepts to precise definition and rational 'coercion'. [2] The individual style of Moltmann's theologising; if Moltmann is a theologian who creates pictures or images, rather than a philosophical theologian, is he unfairly treated when subjected to 'rational critique' and notions of conceptual coherence? The second area of discussion is the issue of right and wrong belief. Is it possible, following D Z Phillips, that we can exempt a believer from critique which sees certain things as impermissible and leading to irrational belief, incoherent stances, to positions which must be 'corrected' if they are not to be wrongly, mistakenly held? If this is so, then Moltmann is neither 'right' nor 'wrong' in his approach to the phenomenon of evil. He is simply entitled to his 'view of things'. This brings us to the third area of concern. The so-called principle of contradiction is a vital element in judgement and so critical evaluation. Is there though, a key level of contradiction in Moltmann which is resolved by an underlying Hegelian dialectic?

The way in which it can be argued that the language theologians use has to be seen as referring to some definable values or characteristics of human existence if it is to convey meaning, is a matter I have already discussed at some length. An apophatic theology will arguably only allow us to conclude that "God" is either fundamentally un-related to the world and its possibilities, or that if he is related, it is in an entirely incomprehensible fashion. There will of course be no way of deciding

between these two options. To be able to say nothing about "God" as love or as just gives no indicator of what God is like. God may destroy one universe as he creates another (although how we reach the stage of saying he creates I am not sure). God could be evil. But is it possible to apply such a concept to God, or negate this characterisation? It would be after all impossible to say that God is love, or is wholly good. When we talk about God in the Christian context, we do so with the belief that God is love, that we can say crucial things about what this love is like. Holding this does not permit us to say that being love is accidental to God in the way that our uncle's boiling an egg once a week could be to him. The entailments of the proposition God is love are not equivalent to those of the statement that our uncle boils an egg once, or even twice a week. It might be said in response that God is love, but is a 'lot' more besides, just as our uncle is hardly likely to be substantially defined as an individual who boils an egg. Clearly nevertheless, boiling an egg may or may not preclude a whole host of distinctive and defining features about one's uncle. He could be an egg scientist, a meat-eater or a vegetarian; a mass-murderer, or a pacifist - but being wholly good and perfectly loving, is incompatible with being wicked, irresponsible - responsible for evils irreconcilable with perfect goodness. In the theodicy debate, it is this issue which counts.

Are we going to allow that an expression such as 'God is love' is grounded in the fact that love can be characterised as such and such? Are we going to say that these expressions, defined and re-defined in the light of scripture and experience, allow us to reach conclusions as to roughly the kind of actions in which love is exemplified? If we say no, we have no way of saying that any evil is incompatible with God's being wholly loving and good, because we cannot say what God's being good

means. Wanting to say moral things of God, understanding that God reveals such things to us, requires a certain limiting of the use of a word. If we can very roughly characterise this love, look at the life and death of Jesus, we arguably cannot say that God's love is distinct (if not easy or cheap), alive even in the most awful circumstances; that God is love - but hold that this love rides on a 'dark side'. We either say God is love, and is wholly good, or say nothing of divinity and goodness and justice as understood in Christianity. God cannot be part love, wholly good only in certain respects.

I have referred in passing to Richard Swinburne. I do not want to repeat in detail the kinds of arguments looked at previously, and I think it reasonable to accept that Christian belief involves propositions which are required to be coherent: that is, that they are such that we could suppose them to be true. This is not the same as holding that Christianity consists of sets of propositions. Nevertheless propositions, and our ability to make them about God and his relationship to his earth are crucial. They are statements about the divine love; human love, human failing; hope; suffering; the world and its future with God, and so on. I would argue that there is no section of Moltmann's theology which does not display and presuppose a number of beliefs about what God is like, or not like, what God is going to do, has done, and so forth. Shortly I will be looking at the possibility that Moltmann theologises in a special way which puts him beyond assessment of the coherence of beliefs in his theology - a position which I will disagree with. For the meanwhile, I am assuming that at least some of his theology falls under the general heading of theology which is propositional, and thus liable to assessment on criteria of the kind Swinburne defends. I would hope that this contention is supported by the survey of texts in earlier chapters, and

the following is a reminder of the kind of discussions that Moltmann engages in. In God in Creation, he makes these statements:

"... if... we understand the universe itself as involved in an irreversible history, and in the course of evolution, then we are interpreting it as an open system. In this case an entropy may be demonstrable in individual systems and processes, but it does not apply to the whole. We must then, however, assume that the universe itself has a transcendent encompassing milieu, with which it is in communication, and a transcendent future into which it is evolving."
(GC p204)

He also writes:

"As a system aligned towards growing communication, we must also view the world as an anticipatory system. As communication towards every side grows, so too does the scope for anticipation in the realms of possibility. The open system of the world is characterised by self-transcendence, both in individual cases and as a whole. It thrusts beyond itself because, by virtue of its imbalance, it cannot apparently 'tarry' in any given condition. This permanent self-transcendence points towards the forecourt of an inviting and guiding transcendence, and it is only in this forecourt that the self-transcendence is possible... In saying this we are interpreting the universe as the self-transcending totality of a diversity of communicating, individual open systems. All individual systems of matter and life, and all their complexes of communication as a whole exist into a transcendence and subsist out of that transcendence."

And:

"If we call this transcendence of the world 'God' we can then tentatively say: The world in its different parts and as a whole is a system open to God. God is its extra-worldly encompassing milieu, from which, and in which, it lives. God is its extra-worldly forecourt, into which it is evolving. God is the origin of the new possibilities out of which its realities are won." (GC p206)

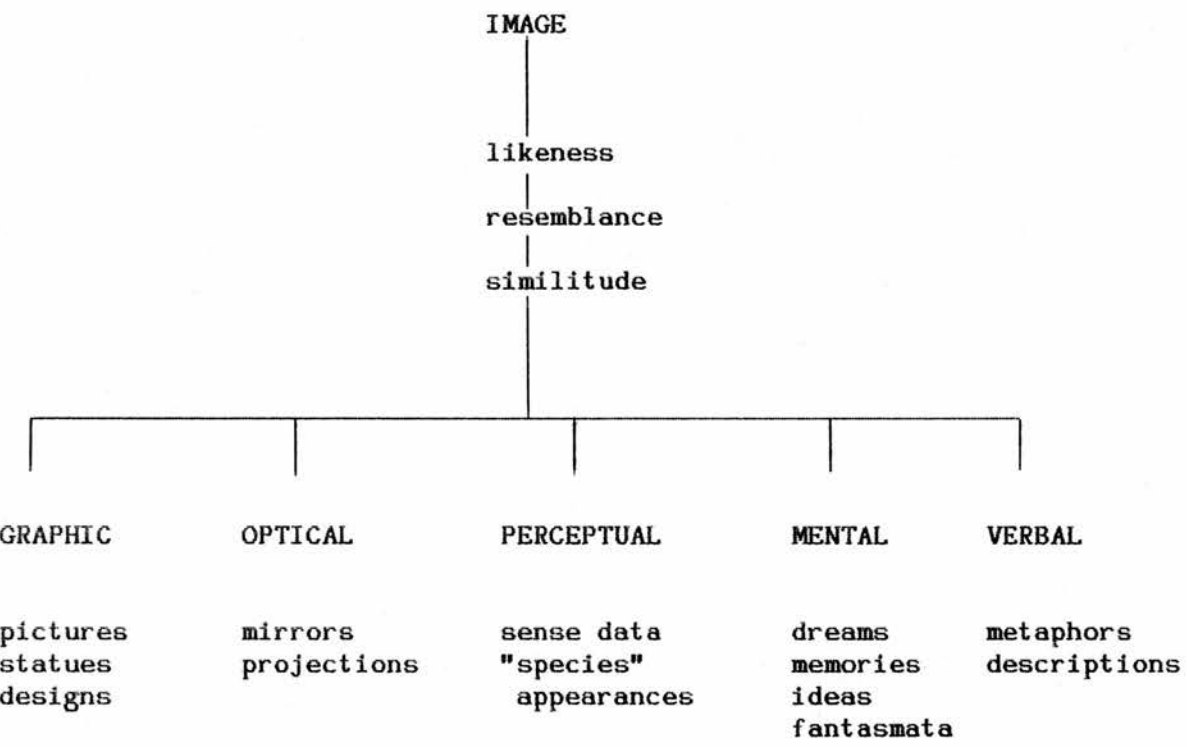
Moltmann adds at the foot of this section: "But of course any such theological statements based on scientific hypothesis can only be working sketches [*Entwürfel*]; they can never be dogmas" (ibid). However, whether or not these kinds of statement can ever be dogmas, they are propositional and they have entailments. The first passage can be viewed as follows. The first proposition is that the universe can be seen as having an irreversible history, as evolving. The second proposition is that it is thus an open system. The third proposition (the world is not as a whole subject to entropy) is I think closely related to the first

two. If the world is complex, ultimately evolving into higher complexity and self-transcendence, it cannot be degenerating into overall entropy, as this implies increasing disorder. Of the first two propositions, as Moltmann seems to understand them, you could not affirm the one and deny the other. That is, the one entails the other, which is more than simply to say that they are compatible. An open system, for Moltmann, is one open to God, to self-transcendence into the guiding transcendence of God. An evolving universe, as opposed to one with a reversible history and a degenerative dynamic, or a static reality, is one which accords with this belief, in fact presupposes it.

Most importantly, I think that Moltmann is operating with concepts that at the level of dogma or core belief cannot be substantially changed without renouncing Christianity. Whether or not we are ever driven to drop these beliefs because they are flatly incompatible with what science tells us, or they preside more or less intact over ever changing scientific world views, and are not to be thought of as open to change themselves, they have entailments and conditions of coherence. This is the crucial point. I will discuss this issue further in the following section, where it is naturally a key factor in assessing the possibilities for a privileged kind of talk in Moltmann's theology which would have an effect on our view of his handling of the problem of evil.

The second issue in the question of the openness of Moltmann's theology to critical analysis involves the problem of whether or not he is constructing special theological pictures or images, which would mark his out from other more conventional reflections on the problem of evil - and the extent to which, if he were, this would invalidate discussion of the kind characteristic of the theodicy debate. W T Mitchell's outline of a

family tree of images is a useful starting point for this discussion (ICONOLOGY, p10).



It is evident that if we accept that Mitchell gives a more or less comprehensive outline of the major references of the term image, any single definition of image is going to be difficult unless we then proceed to make some fairly elaborate differentiations. Mitchell (whose book is an exploration of 'iconophobia' and 'iconophilia'), writes: "We speak of pictures, statues, poetical illusions, maps, diagrams, dreams, hallucinations, spectacles, projections, poems, patterns, memories, and even ideas as images, and the sheer diversity of the list would seem to make any systematic, unified understanding impossible" (op.cit. p9). I believe that the issue of image or picture as it relates to Moltmann does not require an investigation which would be of quite such breadth. Pictures (graphic), statues, constructions, or designs, do not appear (as reproductions) in his theology. Neither does he present his theology by means of extensive verbal reference to the representations and

expressions of art; there is a only brief reference to the Isenheim crucifixion. It might be said that if ideas are in some way images, then his theology is constituted by a kind of imagery, however far from being a work of graphic art, or reliant on detailed description or grounded on metaphor. Still, I do not think that we need to pursue this line far. It can be seen that however we come to have our concepts of goodness, justice, evil, the actual explication and inter-relation of these concepts has to recognise certain principles or universal practices: it needs to maintain coherence. Propositions have entailments, and if we wish to be generally intelligible, this cannot be ignored. Moltmann sketches with reference to certain theological 'truths' as absolutely indispensable, inescapable rules of theological perspective, such as God is love, wholly good, and so on. The possibilities of his opening up a dimension of image or picture which contradicts what is communicated in 'propositional' theology, or enlarges the theological horizon to the extent that what is propositionally encompassed becomes relativised, non-axiomatic for Christian belief, are therefore limited.

In exploring what might constitute a privileged verbal image, we can ask the following question. If one makes out a theology which has beliefs at its heart which as beliefs can be rendered propositionally (there is no demotion of non-verbal communication and practice intended here), a theology which is accessible and not evidently incoherent, can I claim that in a privileged area I may contradict or marginalise what is made clear or central in a "rationally accessible" area? Presumably what makes the privileged verbal image or theological 'picture' exempt from critical analysis of the kind found in theodicy discussion is that it does not operate in the same way as propositional theology. It can neither be held to affirm, complement, or deny the non-privileged text in the usual ways.

This raises a problem. If we cannot legitimately *infer* that the privileged image either affirms, complements, or denies the propositional theology which surrounds it, what is the cognitive or emotional content or potential of this verbal 'picture'? Surely there must be some? If it somehow tells us something very significant about God, the kind of thing which would affect our view of the theodicy question, there must be some way to demarcate this approximately, or come to some kind of public understanding.

If we say that the 'image' conveys something about God's love, or the nature of suffering (which it must do if it is to relate to the Christian theodicy debate), then we are setting it firmly in a public theological world, even if we are trying to add something new. Admittedly this begs the question of what does the image 'image forth' in its own right that is Christian? However, I do not know what this could be if it could not be rendered propositionally in some way and thus open to criticism and comparison. A privileged dimension of verbal theological picture making, however exactly we are to conceive of this (and I cannot find anything in Moltmann's work which would suggest what it might be), is a human creation, although it will of course be 'saying' something about a non-human agent. But unless it is conveying nothing to us about God, except that nothing can be said excepting this condition that nothing can be said, it will be saying something about the God who in Christian belief, and apparently to Moltmann, is love, who is just, who creates and forgives out of boundless grace, or referring to such a God. It has to be enquired if the fact that it what it conveys cannot be rendered into some propositional forms such as 'God is love', or 'God is not evil', or as someone suggested "God is like a Kangaroo", is a handicap or not to its telling us anything about the God who is love, and whether or

not it can possibly be seen to relate constructively to what we pray, hope, trust in as Christians?

A dimension of theological picture making faces the following problem. Does it refer to God? Does it refer to any divine attributes? Perhaps by metaphor or description, or allusion to works of art in the Christian tradition? Does it allow us to affirm core theological thinking and Christian belief, with its notions of the necessity of saying God is love, good, just? If the answers to the questions are negative, then I can see little chance of going forward with the notion of theological 'picture' making. If the answer to even one is positive, then I think that there must by implication be a positive answer to them all.

Again, for any area of picture making or theological 'images' to gain exemption from normal critical analysis, it must neither be seen to affirm, complement, or involve denial of the surrounding (non-privileged) propositions. For if it did any of these things, we would be entitled to ask 'how?' (If it doesn't do any of these things, we can ask what its significance is). If a privileged Moltmannian verbal 'image' or theological 'picture' 'affirms' that God is wholly good and perfectly loving, how would this be? The 'picture' must be wholly other than propositional, or dependent on a propositional/ confessional framework if it is to qualify for exemption, and yet convey important truths about God and his relationship to the world. I have argued that there are major problems facing Moltmann's analysis of the theodicy question and what is involved in an adequate response to it. A proponent of privileged theological picture making, if he is to show that such an evaluation is fundamentally misguided, needs to demonstrate not merely that there are mysterious non-conceptual images or tableaux in Moltmann's theology, but

that they have a real bearing on the way one goes about assessing his treatment of theodicy.

There are several ways this might be so. The non-conceptual images may reveal, as I have suggested, that God is in some crucial way beyond any human definitions about what he is about, and that this evacuates talk that God is love, wholly good, of any real significance. However, this would disastrously undermine the whole theological enterprise. It must imply not only that we do not know *whether* God is wholly good, but that he is *not* wholly good. For if we can never apply such terms to God in a significant way, then God is not described or characterised in such terms. We may hope he is something vaguely akin to what we mean in such language; but how can this be? It might be felt that if God is not ever evil, he might be wholly good. However, the impossibility of such talk being meaningfully applied, forbids such moves, and points to the absolute negation of all that could be meaningful to us, that is involved in a thorough-going negative theology.

Perhaps the privileged theological pictures may be understood through references to their contribution in non-privileged text. But this is pointless. Why speculate about what such 'image' theology would be like in its implicatiuons for theodicy, when what it would essentially convey is already to hand in the propositional or critically accessible text? Whilst still unsure of what such an image might be, let us look at a further possibility. It is an image which without being legitimately rendered in propositional form is nevertheless 'imaging' forth certain things with a clarity and depth of meaning which it possesses out of its unique nature. Without dependence on conventional theological talk, it is its own criterion of what it signifies. In a sense graphic art

establishes its own conventions and criteria by the very nature of the media. There is little point in asking if Rembrandt wrote grammatically if we are concentrating on a painting. In art, it is though legitimate to ask what relationship the image has to our everyday perceptions. The difference is what makes the painting an artistic representation or expression. So in theology, we arguably need to ask how a non-propositional theological 'picture' stands in relation to the 'truths' of a creed. Without some kind of conceptual meshing, in a realm of words (which one must suppose does not work with metaphor, description of places, people, ideas, colours, attitudes, or reference to art), how are we to characterise our 'picture'?

Where we are claiming to give positive content to the God idea of a kind which would have a bearing on the theodicy question, we are, I would argue, bound to provide something which can be rendered propositionally, which would lead us to qualify our understanding of beliefs such that God is love, in some important way. When Moltmann uses words such as love, death, future, suffering, justice, joy, nature, he is doing so with a propositional framework. In any particular section of his work he asserts or accepts things about God and the world which are subject to public conditions of meaning. And indeed the passages below are evidence that no special privileges relating to an area of theological 'pictures' can be, or are claimed by Moltmann. He writes in The Crucified God, that:

"The understanding of the death of Jesus in the context of his life must be theological, and must take into account the God for whom he lived and spoke." (CG p148)

Although:

"By the standards of the cry of the dying Jesus for God, theological systems collapse at once in their inadequacy." (CG p53)

And yet:

"When the crucified Jesus is called the 'image of the invisible God', the meaning is that *this* is God, and God is like *this*. God is not greater than he is in this humiliation. God is not more glorious than he is in this self-surrender. God is not more powerful than he is in this helplessness. God is not more divine than he is in this humanity. The nucleus of everything that Christian theology says about God is to be found in this Christ event... Here God has not just acted externally, in his unattainable glory and eternity. Here he has acted in himself and has gone on to suffer in himself. Here he himself is love with all his being." (CG p205)

What is important here, is that although Moltmann shows how the events of Easter can cast theological systems and 'gods' into disarray, Easter is not itself beyond a crucial level of description and understanding. Indeed, it is this theological understanding which allows one to say that theological systems are perennially shaken by the event of the cross.

It is interesting to look at his view of symbols in God in Creation:

"... essentially speaking, the whole of life is tacitly present in every individual experience of life, and the world itself is latent in every experienced impression of a particular object. Consequently our attempt to use symbols as a way of finding our bearings in the all-embracing whole is not really a transference at all... Every experience that happens to us brings with it a context of meaning without which we cannot take in the experience at all. This wider horizon literally 'dis-closes' itself, in its first, daybreak colours, in the individual experience. But it is not wholly absorbed by that experience. It is the transcending element in the individual experience. Symbols represent this inherent tension, present in every experience, between the determined and the undetermined - the tension between particularity and totality. It is this tension that is the ground of the symbol's surplus of meaning. Through the movement of their 'meaning more', symbols do not establish facts; they release experiences. Symbols do not define, they 'give us something to think about', and invite us to new discoveries. Symbols should be understood as the initiatives for processes of perception and interpretation..." (GC p297)

Moltmann is speaking about special kinds of image. He does not attempt to explore every kind of experience as symbol with a surplus of meaning, although perhaps every experience could ultimately be invested with wide significance. It is arguably true that "every experience that happens to us brings with it a context of meaning without which we cannot take in the experience at all" (ibid). Perhaps this is a way of saying that

people see their experiences as reflecting complex and ever-changing sets of circumstances around them, with which they inter-act; or see that they interpret or 'experience' them as experiences of this or that sort in the context of a value system continually re-shaped by, and shaping, experience. And perhaps an horizon of this sort is the "transcending element in the individual experience" (ibid). However, in his talk of symbols Moltmann is concentrating on certain pictures, parables and metaphors which relate to our experiences in a special way:

"There are fundamental patterns which lend bearings to human life, and to which language reverts to again and again, because they provide an order for the unconscious. We call images which put a fundamental impress on the soul or psyche, 'archetypes'. Every archetype has its own world of symbols and its own wealth of images and its own possible methods of transferred speech. An archetype is a predisposition of the soul which produces and orders concepts, absorbs experiences and gives them expression." (GC p298)

He goes on to say that:

"We shall be comparing the symbols in the light of the messianic viewpoint, not purely in the context of religious history. My intention is to indicate the points at which the Christian world of symbols has absorbed these other symbols of the world, and to show they have been transformed in the process." (ibid)

This is interesting because there is perhaps a suggestion that the Christian symbols are symbols in a range ("My purpose is... to compare the biblical symbol of the world as God's creation with other symbols of the world, and to relate them critically to one another." ibid), which could lead us to explore the contacts, if any, between Moltmann's kind of theology, and say, that of John Hick's God Has Many Names. Ultimately, I think that Moltmann's theology is really not amenable to such a treatment. Whilst he is thinking in a 'universe encompassing' Christian tradition, symbols are thought of primarily for what they have to offer Christianity, in what they say about humanity and about the world in this context. The following is important for our understanding of the possibility of locating a non-conceptual theology in Moltmann:

"In comparing the symbols of the world which I have described, our

aim will be to move from images and the visions of the imagination to concepts. Our purpose is to arrive at a mutual complementation of the ideas inherent in the different symbols of the world, so that we can evolve an understanding of the human being in his world which is richer than any single world symbol is capable of achieving. Finally - as I have already indicated through my account of the different symbols - we shall ask what form a Christian integration of these symbols of the world could take. Here Christian integration does not mean an appropriation by the church. It means the interpretation of religious history in the messianic light. This interpretation also suggests the possibility that the creation traditions of the Old Testament might also be relativized and integrated into a new total picture. Christian belief in creation is messianic belief in creation. Messianic belief in creation as a perception of the world and human beings in the messianic light of their redeeming future." (GC p316-7)

So it appears that a realm of privileged theological picture making is one that would have its locus somewhere between the images and visions of the imagination, with their inherent conceptual content, or conceptual ordering facility, and the kind of propositional theology which says God is love, and attempts to communicate something more or less definite about what this means, making inferences, and referring to symbols. I am still not sure what this privileged way of doing theology might be, and can think of no examples in Moltmann.

Perhaps this idea of theological picture making has distracted from the possibility that Moltmann's theology is from start to finish, or in very crucial places, poetic and dramatic and in this way not open to a simple critique based on concerns with coherence. Again though, I am prepared to argue that Moltmann does not theologise in a way which puts him beyond the bounds of propositional analysis, and certainly this is true of his handling of the problem of evil. There may be many ways of speaking about God, or ways of miming, music-making, designing, and crucially, daily living, which reflect something of what God is about, and how people can respond to the feelings and understanding that God cares for the world, for society, and for individuals. Here the sense is not to be found outside the action in some dry verbal summary, but in the

energy and grace, movement, love and care, which is what it is, in practice. However, Moltmann's theology is conceptually based. All I can do is to continue to draw attention to what Moltmann has said, the way he says it. I can, as I have noted, find no substantial evidence that would support this kind of claim that Moltmann is 'poetic' in a way which means that statements that God is love, and that the suffering of one innocent child is enough to condemn the kindly God of theism, are no longer problematic for his theology. I believe it would be demeaning to Moltmann if we held that he never really means what he appears to say at crucial moments; when, for instance, he says that the kindly God can no longer exist if such and such is the case (where one set of beliefs about a god is invalidated, given their entailments, by events which are incompatible with its being true that such a god exists). He may make judgements which we believe to be mistaken, or make real theological advances, but he is not theologising above and beyond the concepts which are the very crux of the theodicy debate. If Moltmann is deliberately creating a theology which incorporates these concepts, indeed depends upon them, and yet escapes the problems attached, he will have made the theodicy debate happily irrelevant. Overall, this does not seem to be the case.

I turn now to the thinking of D Z Phillips. I think a discussion of his views will add support to the claim that it is legitimate to ask certain kinds of question about what people say about God. Moltmann does not discuss the question whether or not belief in general is specially privileged. Claiming such a privilege is certainly one response that could be made to criticism of his theology, especially if it is thought that it has a special indefinable quality which carries it away from the field of critical evaluation. I have not been able to characterise this quality, but it may be that D Z Phillips provides the strongest answer as

to what this might be in his ideas on mistakenness (where it would become a general feature in life). He also gives what he would consider a Christian response to the facts of evil and suffering, without resorting to conventional notions of justifiability. This is an interesting position, as it shows the kind of thinking which may be involved when we say God is perfectly good and just, but that the evil that is permitted does not have to be reconcilable with the requirements of the good which we feel the universe to be somehow centred on.

Phillips is well known for his criticism of the moral insensitivity and human unacceptability of theodacists arguments. In particular, those of R Swinburne have been subject to strong attack. That the failure of Swinburne's enterprise can be greeted with equanimity, even assurance, stems, one supposes, from Phillips paradoxical sounding rejection of the idea of *mistaken* belief, and his arguments for the place of mystery in religion. I cannot see otherwise how his alternative to Swinburne's approach, recognition of the radical pointlessness of our experience of evil and suffering (which I think incompatible with Christian belief), is tenable. But more on this shortly. He writes: "Kierkegaard once depicted a source of confusion in philosophy as thoroughly investigating details of a road one should not have turned into in the first place" (RR p103-4). For Phillips, Swinburne is well down such a road in developing his theodicy. He is moreover later termed in Belief, Change and Forms of Life, an 'externalist' (ibid p80). That is, one who has wrongly given in to the call that Christian belief be accepted on the condition of its successfully meeting the criteria of an autonomous rationality (BCFL p82). Swinburne would describe his activities somewhat differently, as those of one who is interested in assessing "what claim a man who asserts that there is a God is making and whether it is a claim which is

coherent, a claim which makes sense to suppose could be true" (CT p1). As an 'externalist' though, he is held to submit Christian belief to what Phillips holds are alien criteria.

To Phillips the anti-theodicist, Swinburne's world is repugnant when what appears evil is in fact directed towards the general good. In this world "a little evil does no one any harm, and even the greatest evil on closer examination, turns out to be worth the price" (RR p103-4). Finding Swinburne's thinking immoral and grossly insensitive to the realities of suffering, Phillips opts, as I have noted, for an understanding of the 'pointlessness' of evil:

"I have... suggested in discussing what might be meant by someone who said the outcome was in the hands of God, that the force of the belief depends on the absence of the kind of higher level planning so essential to Swinburne's theodicy. The same is true of talk of God's grace in the face of life's evils. In order even to reach the threshold of understanding what might be meant here, the sheer pointlessness of these evils has to be admitted. One has to see, for example, that there is no reason why these natural disasters should not come our way. One has to answer in face of one's cry, 'Why is this happening to me?', 'Why shouldn't it?' This recognition of the pointlessness of suffering can lead in various directions. It has led some to speak of the absurd, but it has led others to speak of all things as being God's gifts, and of things not being one's own by right or reason, but by the grace of God. It is not my purpose to advocate these uses of language, but simply to note their existence." (RR p120-1)

The difficulty with this 'noting' of the existence of such uses of language is that it seems to tolerate an absurdist position, but not the Swinburnian road. Yet if a philosophy of the absurd is unchallengeable, why not Swinburnianism also? In regard to Phillips' treatment of the latter, is it not also true that there are arguments against our accepting that experience of suffering reflects absence of a higher order in reality, and pointlessness, and for the incompatibility of this position with belief in a wholly good, perfectly loving creator? And after all, it must be on an understanding of moral entailments that

Phillips rejects Swinburne. It appears we might be able to show that an absurdist view of life experience is not compatible with a Christian one. If we could show that Phillips's own position involves contradictions, what then?

For instance, someone like Swinburne would perhaps say that our existence as fleshly creatures, and our eventual physical failure, our 'being-towards-death', is something which can be seen as tied up with a complex inter-relationship of possibilities for evils and goods in our life in this world, and that this range of possible experience is justifiable. Now if Phillips is to stick to his understanding of the pointlessness of suffering, and be consistent in his rejection of theodicy like Swinburne's, he must deny this. However he holds that recognition of pointlessness, as he has described it can "lead us to speak of all things as being God's gifts". Surely this is self-contradictory if we understand gift in a positive sense. It is not a understanding compatible with his doctrine of pointlessness, if we are to take this doctrine seriously. Phillips rejects Swinburne's thinking because he finds it immoral. He clearly thinks it incoherent to hold that a loving God could work in these ways. He is using a critical technique which involves uncovering inconsistencies and incompatibilities. Now if it is applied to Swinburne, there seems no reason why we should draw back from applying it to Phillips. I for example, do not accept that if Swinburne is wrong, we can then successfully move to a Christian recognition of the pointlessness of suffering. Unlike Phillips I think that Christian belief might well be untenable and incoherent if Swinburne's kind of thinking is immoral - for the reason that belief in a God who is wholly good and perfectly loving entails that suffering be ultimately justifiable. Phillips seemingly does not agree, yet if both his own position is

arguably quite incoherent, and we were to agree that Swinburne's is wholly mistaken, then we should recognise the atheist as offering a stance which is at least coherent. However, this understanding of the moves possible in this situation would though be anathema to Phillips.

This reflects an important area of Phillips thought. If we reject the notion of there being mistaken beliefs, because it is our religious life and commitment which counts, and not its accessibility to some bogus autonomous rationality, then attempts to point out contradictions in Phillips thought are misguided. But before looking at what Phillips says on mistaken belief in Faith After Foundationalism, I will look briefly at his position on criticism and religion in Belief, Change, and Forms of Life. There it is seemingly possible to make important judgements about what people commit themselves to, and I think for good reason.

In the essay 'The challenge of what we know: the problem of evil' (BCFL p52ff), Phillips refers to two charges commonly brought against philosophers of religion who are seen as reflecting Wittgensteinian tendencies. These are, that it is what is seen as religious which circumscribes what is or is not meaningful in religion, and that religion is beyond criticism. In the chapter 'Wittgenstein and Religion: Fashionable Criticisms' (ibid p1ff), he details his claim that these are both theses he has argued against. Thus in Faith and Philosophical Enquiry (p72) he was prepared to accept that believers can make mistakes: "... What they say if it comes under the appropriate criteria of meaningfulness, must answer to these criteria". Some ideas of God are clearly confused, as when Gagarin said that he had not seen God in space. Gagarin's thinking is mistaken, since it conflicts with what might be reasonably expected to be seen in space, and that reality which might be

ascribed to God. Phillips tells one that God's name cannot be associated with nonsense (op.cit. p13). For: "Nonsense remains nonsense even if we associate God's name with it". There are limits to what can be said of God if it is not to decline into some sort of "transcendental metaphysics", or nonsensical superstition. The world must be taken seriously too. He states: "I have argued that religious reactions to various situations cannot be assessed according to some external criteria of adequacy". This is followed by the words: "On the other hand, the connections between religious beliefs and such situations must not be fantastic". What is or is not 'fantastic' is decided by "criteria which are not in dispute" (ibid - not detailed however). Phillips interprets this move in an interesting way. Religious believers who try to explain 'away' the harsh facts of suffering are seen as vulnerable to these criteria, i.e., they are not taking suffering seriously. Similarly, those who describe death as an extended sleep are to be accused of not taking it in its full seriousness. Phillips refers to his arguments in Death and Immortality (p52ff), where he in fact concludes that talk of life after death is mistaken; that the believers eternal life after death is participation in the reality of God; that seeing that nothing is ours by right, dying to self-centredness (and to notions of personal survival), is to die to death, and in this way to have overcome it. It is arguable that this involves an excessive degree of stipulation in regard to what constitutes a correct religious confession, incompatible with the intent to 'note' uses of language. However, it does show clear recognition of the fact that there are entailments involved in beliefs and statements about the way things are.

Phillips stance on mistaken belief is developed in his critique of the 'foundationalist' position in epistemology.'

"Foundationalism is the view that belief is a rational belief only if it is related, in appropriate ways, to a set of propositions which constitute the foundations of what we believe. It assumes, from the outset, that belief in God is not among these foundational propositions. Belief in the existence of God, it is said, stands in need of justifications, grounds, reasons, foundations... We are acquainted with countless cases where it is appropriate to be asked why we believe what we say we believe, and it is simply assumed that belief in God is another belief of this kind. Once this assimilation of belief in God to other kinds of belief takes place, asking whether belief in God is rational quickly becomes a matter of seeking evidence for the existence of God." (FAF p3)

This has introduced what Phillips terms 'evidentialism' into the philosophy of religion: Swinburne as the modern Cleanthes, and J L Mackie the Cleanthes of unbelievers (cf. Humes's Dialogues on Natural Religion). But the God of philosophical theism, as the subject of such argument and counter-argument is not, Phillips believes, the God of the Christian, of the bible. To believe in God is not to entertain a hypothesis, nor, in a remark directed at Swinburne, "to embrace the best available explanation given the evidence at hand" (FAF p8). God is the measure of all things for the believer. It is simply not possible for the believer that he [God] does not exist: Camus said that to judge God is to kill him in one's heart. Thus for the believer, God judges man, and not vice versa.

Phillips discusses Alvin Plantinga's efforts to show that foundationalists have no real criteria for deciding what constitutes such a proposition (Plantinga in Reason and Belief in God). Take for instance, self-evidence. Plantinga argues that a properly basic proposition would be one which stands by itself.²

Here the theist is able to argue that foundationalists themselves lack any reason for maintaining the beliefs basic to their noetic structure; that the foundationalist relies on self-evidentiality for his/her propositions, but if asked to provide a criterion for this, will, in the

attempt have to call on other supporting 'self-evident' propositions, themselves in need of backing, and so on in infinite regress. The foundationalist's commitment to the self-evidentiality of certain propositions, such as that they are basic for all further reasoning, is ultimately an affair of trust. They trust their epistemic practice, something Phillips thinks crucial.

Phillips' interest in Plantinga's moves against foundationalism, is not, he says, to deny that foundationalists give an unsatisfactory grounding for their selection of basic propositions to the exclusion of others. Nevertheless, he wishes to examine 'difficulties' on the route which leads to this conclusion (FAF p24). Plantinga has argued that there is no non-regressive criterion which foundationalists can provide to justify their only apparently basic propositions. Yet it is not that anything whatsoever can be allowed to constitute the foundations of one's noetic structure; there are experiences which allow some beliefs to be considered properly basic, and others not. One's practice is the criterion of what is basic. Phillips' criticism hinges on Plantinga's further belief that one or other of the positions on God's basicity in the noetic structure is still mistaken: indeed, that all our epistemic practices may be misleading, wrong.

Phillips argues: "If showing that the practices are correct is confused, so is showing that they are incorrect" (FAF p25). According to Phillips, Plantinga's move to defend the notion that all one's practices may be wrong re-introduces the idea of external criteria for the practice in which all parties were argued to put their trust: this naturally undermines the notion of trust in practice. For instance, Plantinga considers that an arithmetical proposition of the type $2 + 1 = 3$ may be

self-evident to some, but not necessarily to all:

"Understanding a self-evident proposition is sufficient for apprehending its truth. Of course this notion must be relativized to *persons*; what is self-evident to you might not be to me. Very simple arithmetical truths will be self-evident to nearly all of us; but a truth like $17 + 18 = 35$ may be self-evident only to some. And of course a proposition is self-evident to a person only if he does in fact grasp it; so a proposition will not be self-evident to those who do not apprehend the concepts involved in the proposition." (FAF p26 - Plantinga op.cit. p17)

What is it that those who do not grasp this self-evidentiality may be lacking? Phillips asks if it is some intuition or psychological experience? His thinks that it is not that some experience or special intuition is pivotal when a child gives a correct, or an incorrect answer, but that the answer has been calculated according to the normal practices:

"The self-evidence of the arithmetical proposition is made a function of an individual's reaction... But if self-evidence is a function of an individual's grasp, what is it that the minority can be said to *fail* to grasp?"

For: " What is at stake is not the absence of self-evidence, understood as a function of a reaction lacking in a child, but a child's lack of ability to engage in a certain practice... The question of whether something appears to be self-evident to a person is different from the question of whether a person can see what is self-evident..."

Crucially: " The self-evidence of $2 + 1 = 3$ does not emanate from the epistemic and phenomenological properties of the proposition considered in relation to the reactions of an isolated individual. The proposition enjoys its self-evident status *in* arithmetic." (FAF p27-28)

So, Plantinga's argument that it is practice ie. certain conditions and circumstances, which provide the ground for holding some things being necessarily basic propositions, and not merely anything being so (such as belief in 'the Great Pumpkin'), is undermined by his case for what Phillips sees as a kind of back-door foundationalism. Phillips believes that no metaphysical proofs can be provided to show the absolute necessity of our doing mathematics the way we do: other procedures can

indeed be postulated. However: "... the philosophical point of postulating such alternatives is to rid us of the conviction that there must be some queer kind of necessity underpinning our procedures... *the philosophical postulation of other possibilities is not meant to cast doubt on our own procedures*" (FAF p31). To think that such postulations are real alternatives, in the sense that they are 'right' as opposed to our 'wrong', is to pre-suppose some external criterion that gives a 'vantage' point for choice: "Plantinga is one with the foundationalists in thinking that our practices need such a justification. Since the criterion has not been arrived at yet, our practices can be deemed innocent until proved guilty... *what we have seen is that the intelligibility of our practices await no such verdict, neither do they need it. They are simply there as part of our lives*" (FAF p33).

Expressing the debt that much thinking on the nature of belief owes to Wittgenstein,³ particularly his own, Phillips points to a feature of thinking in terms of the nature of one's 'world picture,' (rather than of competing right or wrong 'world pictures') which is important when proceeding to determine the strengths or weaknesses of his attitude to evil:

"The difficulty Wittgenstein's work presents is that it stands outside the apologetic context. It is difficult to appreciate this if philosophy is itself to be conceived to be a way of assessing religious belief pro and contra. The sense in which conceptual analysis goes beyond Plantinga's negative apologetics is not that it provides a positive apologetics, but that it endeavours to elucidate the kind of beliefs religious beliefs are... Here is a conception of philosophy and epistemology which is neither for nor against religion." (FAF p113)

Still, we may have a philosophical approach which in itself is (arguably) neither for nor against religious beliefs, in that it is only concerned with whether or not they are coherent. We may for example question if the idea of an infinitely extended disembodied person is a

coherent one, one we could suppose to be true, and this could be seen as a hostile question, following from an inherently biased rationalist perspective. But people are free to attempt to show that it is not an incoherent proposition (as Swinburne does), or that it is not involved in their belief. However, I am more interested in the particular debate surrounding the problem of evil. The affirmations that God is love, creator and sustainer of the universe, the challenges presented by evil and suffering, and hope for redemption are central to Christian faith. To see if they present a coherent range of beliefs, or even if we can ask this question is not an unimportant or outrageous intention. However, Phillips shows that he does not (uniformly at least) share this view that coherence is of critical importance in looking at belief.

He refers to the position that it is in "the context of ritual and worship in which the possibility of religious experience has its sense". He notes how this approach has raised questions of priority, there being other competing theories "which explain ritual as emanating from experience" (FAF p207). He holds that both perspectives will prove confusing insofar as they emphasise a temporal sequence. For instance, in the former option the development of ritual practices is utterly mysterious. It is argued: "Practices divorced from religious experience are just as unintelligible as religious experiences divorced from religious practices". And: "We need to get away from... [a] 'chicken-or-the-egg' way of thinking... as Lindbeck says 'The primary knowledge is not about *the* religion, nor *that* the religion teaches such and such, but rather *how* to be religious in such and such ways'". What may be disputed is Phillips' contention that whilst the issue of the temporal priority of practice, belief, or experience is one which can obscure their interdependence, the core knowledge in religion is always simply to do with

how to be religious in "such and such ways", where this might imply a secondary status for the role of the coherence of belief in determining how a practice is justified. Where scripture describes religiously significant actions, and events, these are held to determine how and why one is to act. There is, I would argue, a conceptual content in being religious in that one may suppose that being religious in "such and such ways" involves acceptance or espousal 'of the fact' that certain things are true about how the world has gone, goes, should go, and will go: about the creator who brought it into being, of what nature, and with what intention; and about good, evil, and redemption.

The chapter 'Epistemological Mysteries' (FAF p255ff) is prefaced with a reference to some words of Wittgenstein: "Christianity is not a doctrine, not, I mean, a theory about what has happened and will happen to the human soul, but a description of something that actually takes place in human life. For 'consciousness of sin' is a real event and so [is] despair... Those who speak of such things... are simply describing what has happened to them, whatever gloss anyone may want to put on it" (Culture and Value). It is arguable nevertheless that the Christian confession is one which may be vulnerable on grounds of coherence. This seems like a grave misunderstanding of the point Phillips presumably intends to be conveyed in this quotation, that the person experiencing a sense of 'sin', is in fact being religious in 'such and such a way' rather than ever thinking of theories, and attempting to apply them to existence, or feeling the way they do because they adhere to beliefs which they could exchange for others, and not feel the way they do (or they might in fact feel much the same, but for different reasons). What I am saying is that insofar as say, sin and despair, death and illness are human experiences, and they are understood to occur in a world

created by a God who is love and who is wholly good, there is a place for recognition of problems about God and evil. A weeping slave may tell us of his or her despair at the consequences of disobeying the master, and it would be true to say that they are probably describing how they feel. If they live in a state with doctrines of universal freedom and equality we may go to ask if this kind of despair is compatible with holding that it is true that equality and freedom is a reality for all. A mass killer may have a sense of sin after having killed his innocent victims, and experience conversion. That does not prevent us asking if this kind of killing is compatible with the world's being created by a God who is wholly good. It is not enough to say that asking this question is a real event for the asker. It needs to be recognised why this is a *question*, and not just an expression of perplexity.

I have spent some time looking at Phillips because he shows the kind of things which happen when we set out to abandon what are arguably core aspects of Christianity concerning coherency and the problem of evil. Most importantly, he does so on the basis of arguments which would appear to be the kind we would generally need to forward to justify or explain our moving away from conventional kinds of theodicy discussion. Moltmann makes moves which if they are to be exempted from normal criteria would appear to need such support; but he does not provide arguments and justifications, and this is the primary reason behind turning to Phillips. Phillips deplores attempts to justify the suffering that occurs. He thinks they are immoral. He thinks they involve submitting Christian belief to alien criteria. But it seems that his attempt to show that thinking our belief might in any way be mistaken is contradicted by his own stipulations on what is sense and nonsense, and undermined by the fact that Christian belief is about certain things; his own version with

its absence of moral content and dependence on 'primitive' sensations of awe and wonder is arguably incompatible with the kinds of belief that most Christians have about God's love for the world. Ultimately, although we may think Swinburne's arguments are bad arguments, it is not right to say that seeking to see what people believe (given that they believe some things and not others), and if it is coherent, something we could think of as being true, is in itself a wrong practice. Overall, I believe Phillips positions on what is involved in belief are untenable, that the arguments he makes in their favour are flawed. As a consequence, our imaginary proponent of the idea that Moltmann be exempted from critical discussion of the kind I have undertaken is arguably unable to show that the thought of thinker like Phillips can lend support.

We now turn to the third issue to be discussed in this chapter, that of contradiction. I believe that Moltmann adopts a position on theodicy which implies a view of insoluble contradiction. That is, certain features of this world are ultimately irreconcilable with the principles of justice and goodness. If we are to consider the world as somewhere which in an ultimate way reflects the supreme wisdom of a wholly good and just God, who is its creator, then these features are not intelligible as aspects of such a world. This second statement is not of course one that Moltmann makes in quite this way, nevertheless it is a conclusion that arguably stems from the first, that much evil is plainly unjustifiable. Moltmann has said there can be no answer to our theodicy question. The full implication of this second statement is that the world is not the creation of a wholly just and good God, given the consideration we could expect such a God to give to the fate of every uniquely valuable individual who would exist if he were to create a world. Still, it may be that Moltmann can be seen as holding a Hegelian view of evil, one where

the kind of contradiction we have just discussed is not present - and where present contradictions could be transcended in a final synthesis.

Can we see a Hegelian dialectic in Moltmann's work? I have noted the occasions when it seems as if this is the case. Yet Moltmann rejects this idea of Hegelian style dialectic.⁴ But we do not need to enter into this question of how many times Moltmann makes Hegelian sounding statements about Easter for instance, and then says he is frankly opposed to any idea of the unfolding of what is logically intrinsic to the life of Spirit, to see whether or not a Hegelian model of contradiction is at the heart of his understanding of theodicy. It is not, and for good reason. It is not possible to say that the God who creates a world, whether this presents us with the dialectical life of Spirit in the full (here I mean Hegel's dialectic), or is unable to show such a developmental logic in its development, is wholly good, if much that occurs in such a world is morally unjustifiable. We can remind ourselves again of the significance of saying that suffering is unjustifiable. Suffering, if it is ultimately unjustifiable, falls outside of any inter-relationships which would allow us to say that it is a possibility necessary for the existence of freedom and the possibility of other worthwhile goods freely chosen, and that the suffering that occurs or can occur is more than balanced by the overall good of valuable action, thought, and the freedom of the human spirit. The connection I make between the possibility of suffering and freedom, is that freedom allows us (where we always could have chosen other than we did) to act in ways which are morally wrong, and which may result in the suffering of others and ourselves. The problem of natural evil and animal suffering is also a great one. If we are to state it as a problem on the ground that natural evil is often unjustifiable (e.g., earthquake,

disease and so on), then we are also looking for some kind of relationality in the way the world goes, which would permit an 'organic' view of things, and enable us to conclude that what is involved contributes to a worthwhile world.

It may be that looking at suffering in such a way that it is Christianly perceived as unjustifiable, is in Hegel's terms, symptomatic of analytical rather than speculative thinking. But if Moltmann thinks much suffering is unjustifiable then he is right not to deny this - although admittedly there seems to be a *de facto* denial of the consequences in the ability to continuing theologising all the same. I do not agree we can assume that the so-called analytical judgement is really an unwarranted breaking-off of some events from others, a kind of theological, philosophical, existential myopia. It is precisely because relational thought fails to show that suffering can be justified by its necessary causal connection with 'worthwhile' goods, that one is led to think of unjustifiable evils. We may be thinking of the moves of Swinburne, or the speculative philosophy of Hegel, but the judgement is essentially the same. Unjustifiability denies, I think, that evil and suffering are intelligible as phenomena within a quality of existence we judge ultimately worthwhile, and with which the possibility of suffering is necessarily inter-twined (which the Christian Hegelian would want to say). Perfect goodness would appear to exclude there being unnecessary and unjustifiable possibilities for evil and suffering. So suffering and evil, if it is unjustifiable, is incompatible with what we could expect of a wholly good and just God. Such unjustifiable evils would not, I think, fit into Hegel's conception of reality, just as Mackie and Swinburne would think it incoherent to claim that a wholly good and loving God exists if one believed that evil and suffering were radically

unintelligible, unjustifiable. The unjustifiable, if it is a final judgement, cannot be intelligible in the world of the wholly good God. If it is intelligible, it is so only in the world of an immoral or amoral God. How do we reconcile Moltmann's position on the death of an innocent child with the following words of Hegel in The Phenomenology of Spirit:

[775] "... it is the *existent* Spirit, which is the individual Self which has consciousness and distinguishes itself as 'other', or as world, from itself. This individual Self as at first thus immediately posited, is not yet Spirit *for itself*; it does not exist as Spirit; it can be called innocent but hardly good. Before it can in fact be Self and Spirit it must first become an 'other' to its own self... Since this Spirit is determined as at first an immediate existence, or as dispersed into the multifariousness of its consciousness, its othering of itself is the withdrawal into itself, or self-centredness, of knowing as such. Immediate existence suddenly turns into thought, or mere sense-consciousness into consciousness of thought; and moreover, because the thought stems from immediacy or is conditioned thought, it is not pure knowledge, but thought that is charged with otherness and is, therefore, the self-opposed thought of Good and Evil."

And:

[777] "... Good and Evil were the specific differences yielded by the thought of Spirit as immediately existent. Since their anti-thesis has not yet been resolved and they are conceived of as the essence of thought, each of them having an independent existence of its own, man is a self lacking in any essential being and is the synthetic ground of their existence and their conflict."

Also:

[780] "... If Evil is the same as Goodness, then evil is just not Evil, nor Goodness Good: on the contrary, both are suspended moments - Evil in general is self-centred being-for-self, and Goodness is what is simple and without a self. When thus expressed in terms of their Notion, their unity is at once evident... The whole is only complete when the two propositions are made together, and when the first is asserted and maintained, it must be countered by clinging to the other with invincible stubbornness. Since both are equally right, they are both equally wrong, and the mistake consists in taking such abstract forms as 'the same' and 'not the same', 'identity' and 'non-identity', to be something true, fixed, and actual, and resting on them. Neither the one nor the other has truth; the truth is just their movement..." (Hegel: Phenomenology of Spirit, p467,469,472. A V Miller trans. OUP 1977)

Hegel also gave a characterisation of religion which shows in a less complex, indeed rather pictorial way, how his thought on the issue of contradiction differs from Moltmann's. In Moltmann it is apparent that if

something is unjust, such as the death of the innocent child, it cannot be made over into something just, by discerning an ultimate worthwhile process in which the possibility of such suffering is an integral part. By contrast, Hegel wrote of religion, that it:

"... is the realm where all the enigmas of the world are solved, where all the contradictions of deeper-reaching thought have their meaning unveiled, and here the voice of the hearts pain is silenced... In this realm of the spirit flow the streams of forgetfulness, where from Psyche drinks and wherein she drowns all sorrow, whilst the dark things of life are softened away into a dream-like vision, becoming gradually transfigured until no more than a framework for the brightness of the eternal." (Hegel: Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, i, p1ff. Speirs and Sanderson trans. 1896; Kegan Paul 1966)

Theodicy-wise, the important part is the first sentence. I now quote again Moltmann's statement:

"Does the resurrection of the crucified Christ also bring the Nothingness of world history into the light of the resurrection? Here the experiences of Auschwitz and Hiroshima raise questions for which no answers are endurable, because the questions are fundamentally protests. Even Hegel found that there was a negative which could not 'be turned to good' in any dialectic. He therefore left the unresolved contradiction - the Peloponnesian and the Thirty Years War, and other mass annihilations - out of his dialectic altogether. Ernst Bloch was able to see nothing in the incinerators of Maidanek except the hard meaningless, annihilation, Nothingness: 'There is undoubtedly a grain of wheat that dies without bringing any fruit, without there being truly - let alone necessarily - any positive negation of this negation afterwards.' Only the militant hope that is associated with objectively real possibilities, he believes, can keep at bay the fields of annihilating Nothingness; but even the passion for life cannot completely do away with the life that is utterly meaningless." (God in Creation p91-2)

But this was the point where Moltmann went on to say: "This idea of the negative is really Manichean. it can do no more than 'keep Nothingness at bay'. It cannot abolish or overcome it" (ibid). And this is where he said: "Is Christian faith in the resurrection in a position to go any further than this? ... Where it can go further is in its hope in the God who raises the dead. Belief in the resurrection looks towards God where humanly speaking there is nothing to hope for and nothing to be done... The hope of resurrection... brings even the Nothingness of world history into the light of the new creation" (ibid). This points to several

things. Moltmann wishes to identify with the reactions of those who can see only negativity in the gas chambers and death pits. He for one is certainly not going to be talking of suffering of this kind that is in any way ultimately justifiable, intelligible in the world of the God who is wholly good, perfectly loving, wise, and free. In the face of the great Lisbon quake, he is willing to proclaim that 'all theodicy turns to lies'. His position is frankly incompatible with Hegel's. Nevertheless, his stance has resemblances to the latter part of Hegel's characterisation of the realm of religion, quoted above. But Hegel is working on the basis of speculative thought which overcomes contradictions, whereas Moltmann opts for a problematic 'clean-break' in getting over the problems of suffering, by refusing to integrate the suffering of the world with the movement of Spirit. I said getting over the problems, because in the last analysis, the problem of evil fades away: "Even 'the end of the world' can set no limits to the God who created the world out of nothing, the God who in his Son exposed his own self to annihilating Nothingness on the cross, in order to gather that Nothingness into his eternal being. And this is true whether the end of the world is brought about by natural catastrophe or human crime". For: "How should the Creator-out-of nothing be diverted from his intention and his love through any devastations in what he has created?" (GC p93) This seems to disregard the the problems of innocent suffering. It also appears that there may be a dialectical movement after all. But I think that it may be safer to say that Moltmann perceives the Nothingness, and that God has to face and vanquish it. To go any further would imply that Moltmann does not recognise contradictory statements on following pages. We find the following statement on page ninety-two (previously cited): "... the protest against senseless murder, with which no one can come to terms, can only retain its staying power if it is borne up by a hope for

the victims of that senseless murder. The protest against the annihilating Nothingness must not lead to the suppression and forgetfulness of the annihilated; and equally, hope for the annihilated must not permit us to come to terms with their annihilation. The first is obviously the danger for revolutionaries; the second is the danger of the religious" (GC p92-3). Despite this, where we look for the implications of what it means that we never come to terms with the fate of the annihilated, it does seem that there are none. The new creation will come, all will be well. Indeed, to cite Moltmann's own words from the same book, "All's well that ends well". Yet I think it important that talk of senseless murder occurs with reference to the annihilating Nothingness. For this Nothingness is a feature conditioning the world's history; in Moltmann's theology it can be tied to such things as mortality, and sin. The question we must ask is: 'can we come to terms with this Nothingness?' If it is so strongly causally connected with the suffering there is, and God is wise, wholly good, perfectly loving and so on, is it possible to say why we must never come to terms with death and annihilation, but at the same time not look questioningly in God's direction?

Let us say that Himmler, although he gave Jewish children sweets, was behaved wickedly. He organised great suffering. Let us also say that those who suffered did so uncomprehendingly. That is, they could see no justification for their suffering. They were suffering in a world where almost anything that could degrade human beings did take place, and where any explanations, such as that in God's world it is divinely permitted that people get mentally disturbed, God must have allowed for this - Himmler is mentally disturbed; in God's world it is permitted that there are evil people - Himmler is one such; human freedom has its acceptable

cost; suffering will bring out what is humanly best in us; the good things in our life are inextricably linked to the kind of reality in which great evil is also necessarily possible, and so on, were shown to be platitudes which could never make what was happening intelligible as the fate of millions of God's creatures, each one of infinite worth; intelligible in the creation of the God who is wholly good and perfectly loving. If this was the case, then why did God create the kind of world there is? Is God callous? Again, is God cruel? If we are not to come to terms with the annihilation of the innocent, how does God? If I say I can never come to terms with the suffering, brutality, and exploitation involved in slaughtering cattle, such that I could never do it myself or witness it, but am content to eat steak, then it is evident that I have somehow come to terms with this suffering despite my scruples. If God could not come to terms with the inevitable decay and death of all his creatures, with sometimes appalling suffering, what does it tell us about him that he permits it? God is in the unique position of not *having to* instantiate this world. Surely he only creates the kind of world he wishes to create. Since he has created the kind of world he has, and we must, I think, if we are to follow Moltmann, say that he cannot come to terms with the suffering that is possible in this world, then we still have to conclude that in practical terms, whatever the moral qualms, he was certainly not going to avoid creating this world. This implies that there must be a reason, a justification for this being so (otherwise it appears God does not know what he is doing). In fact, we can arguably conclude that God would never hold back from creating a world such as this, however many millions might die horribly in that world. For if God could create a world which expressed his love fully, and this was a world in which there was no unjustifiable suffering, then he would have created this world, rather than the one we occupy, with its unjustifiable

suffering. We come to a problem. If this is so, then God chose to create this world because the unjustifiable suffering was a necessary possibility in a world if this world was to fully express the divine love; or this was the only world he could possibly make, and he judged it better to make a world with unjustifiable suffering - suffering with whose injustice he could never come to terms, than not to make a world. Yet this really means that God must have come to terms with injustice. Looking closely at this situation, our ideas of what it means for God to be wholly good, start to fall apart. He would rather have a world, even if it was one pervaded by Nothingness and ultimate injustices, than none. Either way the creation has to be such that it is worth the cost (although what is worthwhile to a god who is not perfectly just and wholly good?). I believe that these are the unfortunate consequences (for Moltmann) of wanting to say that God created the world and is wholly good and just, and that there are unjustifiable evils.

To return to Moltmann and Hegel. It would be possible, as I have noted, to draw together various Hegel inspired statements from Moltmann's theology. However, I think there are difficulties with making anything of this approach. We could undertake it in order to show that whatever he says about theodicy, he is in fact committed to an incompatible dialectical view of things. Indeed, if we push a consistent Hegelian interpretation of Moltmann we must be prepared to recognise that his theology will disintegrate in the process. This may sound over-stated, but the problem of evil is not something incidental to this theology. I have looked at what is distinctive about Moltmann's treatment of the issues, and on this count, found that it is unsatisfactory. It may be that picking over the Hegelian utterances will allow one to conclude that Moltmann successfully integrates evil and suffering into the theological

'big picture'. This will be at the cost of ignoring his deeply held belief that given the world there is, 'all theodicy turns to lies'. So I think we can either ignore what he says on theodicy in favour of a Hegelian (and justificatory) re-working of his theology, or accept that as a whole, the theology is punctuated by allusions to Hegel, whilst the fundamentals are incompatible with a fully Hegelian interpretation. Yet there is a dialectic of a kind. The world is evolving towards a glorious future, and doing so in a series of movements and counter-movements. Still, by fundamentals I mean: a) Moltmann, even when we reject the theodicy stance, does not describe a dialectic which has the ability to escape the criticism that it involves injustice. b) And of course, it is fundamental that Moltmann in fact goes on to say that theodicy is not possible, that much suffering is unjustifiable; if we tie this to the evidence that the dialectic or history of creation is indeed one marked by a concept of ultimately insoluble injustice, we see that what dialectic there is really is a specially Moltmannian one. c) He denies a Hegelian approach, and in God in Creation for instance, or at least, it is clear how the drama is one of God's wrestling with Nothingness and its unjustifiable consequences, rather than as characterised below:

"Philosophy... has to do, not not with unessential determinations, but with a determination insofar as it is essential; its element and content is not the abstract or non-actual, but the actual, that which posits itself and is alive within itself - existence within its own Notion. It is the process which begets and traverses its own moments, and this whole movement constitutes what is positive [in it] and its truth. This truth therefore includes the negative also, what would be called the false, if it could be regarded as something from which one might abstract." (Hegel: Phenomenology of Spirit, p27 A V Miller trans.)

* CONCLUSION *

I began this thesis by attempting to set out why there was a problem of evil, and what the conventional conditions for its resolution were. I suggested that Jürgen Moltmann's thinking stood out from positions normally taken. In chapter one we saw how Richard Swinburne, an eminent theodist and defender of theism put forward an understanding of the use of words which, I held, was of a kind foundational for the view that divine attributes must mean some things and not others. The way in which J L Mackie viewed theological and philosophical concepts in his critique of theodicy defences, clearly rested on this idea that we cannot dilute the meaning (and thus loosen the entailments), of our words beyond certain limits. I took his arguments to represent the kind of critical case being made on fairly widespread readings of what is involved in Christian belief. His arguments were forceful, and of a clarity to make one think carefully about the implications of abandoning theodicy, and accepting that there is evil not proportionate to the good. In other words, that there are insoluble and permanent injustices in a world which we want to say is God's.

We next came to M B Ahern. Like Mackie's, his position was based on the view that evil requires some ultimate justification. However, I disagreed with his argument that we could never actually know whether or not the evil that there is is justifiable, but that we would nevertheless be able to welcome a God who was revealed eschatologically, as a wholly good God. This was important for discussion of Moltmann's position (even if Ahern would think Moltmann clearly wrong to say that some evils are unjustifiable, there is more). For if we can show that Ahern is wrong, as a defender of the wholly good God, to say that we can never know whether

evils are unjustifiable or not, but that he, along with others will be able to say that if [a] god exists, evil will be justified, then any theology which is anti-theodicy will find itself in a difficult position. Of course, if we show the legitimacy of theodicy in principle, this will already be the case. But if we are inevitably made to confront the intellectual need for, and the possibility of positive theodicy arguments, given that it is not possible to wait for a future time when in some way, impossible for us to actually comprehend, things will be shown to have been alright, then there is a real need to find some way of rationally affirming the world as worthwhile here and now on human terms. One cannot be simply neutral on the topic of whether or not this world is ultimately justifiable and human existence worthwhile. So Moltmann may not only fail to escape here on his anti-theodicy stance, but a blanket epoché on theodicy in this world will not be a sustainable position. He will have to acknowledge the possibility of rational theodicy, and the requirement to think hard about what kinds of things proportionate, worthwhile goods are; what the entailments are for our view of the world, when we hold that God is wholly good and perfectly just.

In chapter two I started by looking at some traditional theistic attributes, the divine qualities or characteristics which generate the problem of evil, and the theodicy enterprise. I concluded that perfect goodness, and omnipotence constrained by logical possibilities; or taken with the power to do less than all that it is logically possible to do - even taken with omniscience; or a state where God knows less than all that it is logically possible to know - still compels us to undertake theodicy, hold that evil is justified if God, wholly good, exists. Following this I looked at a number of actual theodicies. J L Mackie had been an example of the kinds of powerful argument which seem to throw

continued belief in the wholly good God into question. It was time to look at what kinds of things theodacists said. Were they for example committed to making blatantly morally unacceptable points, advancing unintelligible, unwarranted arguments, clearly incompatible with Christian belief? Looking at a range of theodicy options, and making some critical comments in passing, it was evident that there was little to suggest that what was being said was *prima facie* incompatible with Christian belief. Indeed, these seemed the kinds of argument most likely to offer a resolution to the problem of evil.

At this point I opened discussion of Moltmann's texts with an introductory survey of his thinking as it most concisely expressed his understanding of the problems of evil, and of theodicy. I concluded that there were arguable inadequacies in his approach. These centred on the paradoxical formulation of a major problem to which a resolution was denied. God was just, and the injustice and unintelligibility of so much suffering was the basis of a yearning for justice - and of a question 'Why?' But to this question there could be no answer. Chapters four, five, six, seven, and eight, looked in detail at the key texts in the Moltmann corpus. If Moltmann was unconventional in his most specific and detailed references to the problem, did his theologising show that overall, a new and coherent response was being evolved?

This is not the place to recount at length the many difficulties, as well as points of interest, which presented themselves in this review of his handling of the issues. On Theology of Hope, I attempted to give an outline of the main development, and then focussed on specific issues. It was apparent that Moltmann rejected Hegel's philosophy of religion, and did not want to be seen as dealing in divine patterns of life. Dialectic,

of a kind where some 'rational' shape or dynamic could be given to the movement of creation, suffering, and redemption, was rejected:- "the glory and misery of past ages do not require the justification of God or reason" (T/H p291). Instead, the corrupted and suffering creation awaited its new possibilities. Religion, Revolution and the Future, and Hope and Planning, were also problematic. They shared a message of divine contradiction of present reality:- "God and reality are analogies which do not yet exist" (H/P p16). Death is inhuman. Human efforts at liberation run into the "sands of nothingness". Indeed, the central alienations in human existence were beyond humanistic visions of reconciliation and renewal. Ultimately it seemed they were God's responsibilities, and in a situation where theodicy was reviled, and much suffering seen as unjustifiable, we were left to wonder if God was truly just.

On The Crucified God, I again attempted to show the overall development, looking closely at the handling of evil and suffering, and to offer a critique, focussing on these aspects. Difficulties arose when our world was found a "night of false life", and death in contradiction to God's righteousness. Taken with the thinking behind the stance on conventional theodicy, the unjustifiable suffering of people, the death of innocents, Moltmann's reformulation of the theodicy question as the "phenomenon of the delay of the parousia" (CG p184), was hard to accept. His view of the suffering of God was moving, but from the point of view of an understanding of the theodicy problem, it was difficult to integrate into a coherent understanding of suffering as permitted by the wholly good God. Suffering and humiliation appeared as things central to the being of God, whilst their being possible in the way they were, presupposed that

there could be a divinely permitted or wrought world of unjust suffering: unjust on Moltmann's own criteria.

In The Trinity and the Kingdom of God we saw how Moltmann's varied exploration of thought on the topic of divine suffering did not, after all, add to the strength of his own position. Excepting the Jewish element, which I looked at at greater length in the section on God in Creation, Moltmann's examples were instrumentalist thinkers. Problems also arose in regard to Moltmann's doctrine of freedom. It was made clear that there was a higher and better freedom than the one we possess, with our history of existence in a world of sometimes cruel necessity, and of forces more powerful than individuals, and beyond the power of societies to control. Some of the key material from The Trinity and the Kingdom of God was dealt with earlier in chapter three. When we combine the thought on unjustified suffering which I cited there, with the doctrine of imperfect freedom, it was again evident that the abandonment of basic theodicy principles had had its price: incoherence. That is, this kind of theologising was not compatible with the entailments stemming from our beliefs about God's being wholly good and perfectly wise.

We then moved to God in Creation. There God was seen to create entirely freely, without duress, out of his absolute goodness. Nevertheless, the actual means by which God was portrayed as creating, involved introducing a devastating nothingness. The nothingness permeated life systems, and appeared to be a sufficient explanation of human sinfulness, and if we follow Moltmann's traditionalist view, death. In chapter nine, I looked at attempts to give Moltmann a privileged position, above or beyond conventional theodicy debate, and made several objections.

From this, what do I conclude? My thesis has been grounded on the following beliefs. Throughout his theology we find Moltmann operating with, or against the background of, a very unusual position on the theodicy question. What he has said about God as love; on the origins of suffering; the kind of suffering in the world; how this relates to God's being with the world; to the divine openness to suffering; human freedom, and our ability to lead a fruitful and meaningful life in the world as it was created, made open to nothingness - amounts to extensive and important theologising done on a revised basis for handling the problem of evil.

So far from Moltman's position being simply unusual, it signalled a revolutionary stance for a major theologian. One which as I earlier noted, if tenable, would make arguments such as those advanced by figures like R Swinburne and J L Mackie, irrelevant. What if he were seen to have succeeded?

Say that a questioner surveys the horizon, in search of possible solutions, new ways of looking at things. Moltmann should figure large on this horizon. What is especially fascinating is that he is able to say that there are unjustifiable evils; evils with which we can never come to terms. Yet he is also able to say that, even if theodicy is impossible and immoral, we can say God is just. This would be an extremely important theological move. Here we have perhaps the first major theologian to throw conventional theodicy overboard, as it were. This is what makes Moltmann a theologian of particular interest to me, and what should also make his talk on suffering of concern to all those interested in the problem of evil.

In the event, I think it has been shown that Moltmann does have an unusual and strongly held view of theodicy, and that his theology on suffering and evil is also distinctive. But in fact, both are highly problematic, and in the final analysis, in its position on suffering and justice, his theology is incoherent. Swinburne, Hick, and Mackie, are not misguided. Justification of evil is a central condition of coherent Christian belief.

I believe that this conclusion is a positive one. The thesis has been that Moltmann offers a very different approach to a great problem - but in the end he fails to show how traditional difficulties are avoided. I believe it is not at all negative to set out to explore what is involved here, and to have reached this particular conclusion. We might say 'this is an interesting area - if Moltmann is right, his position is sustainable, then the theodicy scene has been transformed as never before. However, if we find against him, that would be a negative, and this would be an intolerably non-constructive position to end up in. Therefore it is best not to attempt this kind of exploration'. I do not think that this stance is a defensible one.

The further question of the possibility of the theodicy problem being resolved in the future through some new approach is of course of very real importance. It is a possibility which cannot be ruled out if we are to continue to believe - but I very much doubt that in looking at Moltmann and the issues he raises, we are under an obligation to provide the answer as to what this resolution might be.

I believe that in the thesis I have described arguments from various quarters which represent much of the current debate. It is clear that

Moltmann is a major figure who appears to have broken new ground in a subject which is characterised by well marked positions. As to producing an answer to the theodicy question, I have not come across someone else, who, to my mind, *successfully* meets the problem of evil, or who suggests a radically new direction which *really* does point to an impending definitive resolution. I partly sympathise with Moltmann's position on suffering in his not offering easy solutions. But I have noted my own belief that any justification is going to have to be realistic, will be a 'hard' one if it is to be fully inclusive of world experience, i.e., unpalatable for those who think that the world has to be seen to be ordered in some way where everyone clearly gets their 'just deserts', if it is to be God's world (I think this approach has to be adopted whether one believes in post-mortem existence or not). Theodacists like Hick and Swinburne are right to argue for proportionate justificatory goods, and in doing so their position on God and evil is coherent where Moltmann's is not. However, this thesis is not the place for following up the various complex arguments made in such theodicies, and their counter-arguments. If they were generally acknowledged as indisputable as answers to the problem of evil, there would have been arguably little point in investigating a starkly unconventional 'alternative'. We would not know that God exists, but we would know that a clear answer to criticism on the issue of compatibility with evil was available. In fact, Moltmann might well not have felt able or rather, compelled, to take the position he did. That he did choose a different course out of compassion for the suffering, the innocent, the annihilated, points to the inevitable difficulties of trying to reconcile genocide, or even the most individual and isolated of suffering with belief in a wholly good God. How exactly this might be finally accomplished in theodicy, is a topic too extensive

to discuss here, and whilst obviously related to the issues I have been looking at, it is the subject for other studies.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION:

1. J L Mackie's treatment of the problem of evil simply notes this distinction as 'customary', and works with it. See The Miracle of Theism, p162ff. H J McCloskey has a detailed discussion of varieties of evil, using a number of categories, such as 'Disease', 'natural phenomena which bring pain and suffering to men and animals', 'the suffering caused by man to man and to animals', and 'moral evil' (God and Evil). However, there seems no reason to question that these categories could be reduced to the two, physical (or natural), and moral evil, without thereby limiting the scope for close analysis of the particular sub-divisions, such as that between diseases and earthquakes. John Hick gives the standard moral/natural evil distinction (whilst noting some imprecision in theodicy terminology: see also G Wallace's article 'The Problems of Moral and Physical Evil', in Philosophy, 46, 1971, pp349-51). He also refers to 'metaphysical evil', saying: "This phrase refers to the basic fact of finitude and limitation within the created universe. The Augustinian tradition of theodicy, on its more philosophical side, traces all other evils, moral and natural, back to this as their ultimate cause, or at least (in the case of sin) as their ultimate occasion" (Evil and the God of Love p18). We could though consider this as a natural evil, although since the universe is the consequence of a divine act, it may also be argued to be a moral act, which if we would think it ultimately immoral (in relation to a wholly good God) because of its consequences, could not be compatible with the existence of the Christian God.

Rolf Gruner is highly critical of theodicy debate because amongst other things, he considers it to have very limited categories of evil in the natural and moral evil distinction (Gruner: 'The Elimination of the Argument from Evil', Theology, 83, 1980, p418ff). However, I do not think he takes fully into account the complexity of discussions such as can be found in the work of McCloskey and others.

2. Ahern: The Problem of Evil, p33ff. McCloskey: God and Evil, p5ff. Plantinga: God and Other Minds, p116ff.

3. Plantinga notes this in God and Other Minds, p116ff.

CHAPTER ONE:

1. There is though the position that whilst we may say such things as 'God is wholly good, and is love', and think we are saying something with important meaning, we are not to pursue what is (or is not) implicit in this meaning. John Hick discusses a problem related to this attitude: "We are told, for example, that the very notion of a theodicy is impious. It is said to represent a foolish pretension of the human creature, under the illusion that he can judge God's acts by human standards... Now certainly the problem of evil (like any other religious question) can be approached in an impious spirit... However, the subject does not demand an impious attitude in the thinker who investigates it... suppose we use... the more neutral term 'understand' [more neutral than to 'justify' God's ways]. Is it impious to try to understand God's dealings with mankind? Surely if theology is permissible at all, it would be arbitrary to disallow discussion of the topics that come under the rubric of

theodicy: creation, the relation of human suffering to the will of God, sin and the fall of man, redemption, heaven and hell" (Evil and the God of Love p6-7). Of course, we can only discuss these topics if we feel that they are subjects for intelligible discourse, that the words and concepts used have meaning. If they did not, there could not be such subjects. That theodicy is so closely tied in with what we do understand as fundamental about God, means we can hardly deny its possibility, its grounds, without repudiating all talk of the God who is love, where that claim is held to be a meaningful one.

Another approach which would question Swinburne's view of credal statements is that of D Z Phillips. Phillips writes for instance: "One should 'die to the understanding' and give the appropriate response to the contingencies which are experienced in life, as did Job: 'The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord'" (Faith After Foundationalism, p283). And: "Theodicies distort this mode of religious acceptance. They want to make God's ways our ways, and our thoughts his thoughts [Phillips seems to be allow room here for the view that 'ordinary' statements are perhaps propositional in the way that Swinburne understands. But what then is involved in credal statements?]. They do not recognise that what needs to come in at the right point... is awe, wonder, and mystery" (ibid: see chapter nine of this study).

2. See The Coherence of Theism p272ff, and p278.

3. See The Coherence of Theism p99ff, and p273ff.

4. See Hick, Evil and the God of Love, p65ff, and p301. Hick thinks Mackie's compatibilist position coherent, though he denies its applicability to the Christian view of things: "Is it logically possible for God so to make men that they will freely respond to Himself in love and trust and faith? I believe that the answer is no" (op. cit., p308). But he rejects the traditional free will defence (see chapter two of this study); McCloskey, God and Evil, p115ff; A Plantinga, God and Other Minds, p131ff, and God, Freedom and Evil, p29ff; Hugo Meynell has an interesting discussion of theism and freedom in God and the World, p46ff.

5. The reference to Demea's words, "The world is but a point in comparison to eternity..." can be found on p199 of the Bobbs-Merrill edition, Indianapolis, 1980. Philo concludes Part X with the words: "...there is no view of human life, or of the condition of mankind, from which, without the greatest violence, we can infer the moral attributes, or learn that infinite benevolence, conjoined with infinite power and infinite wisdom, which we must discover by the eyes of faith alone" (op.cit., p202).

6. Mackie's most influential account is in his 'Evil and Omnipotence', Mind, 64, 1955, p210. This account is discussed by Plantinga in God and Other Minds, p168. For Aquinas's account of what is not feasible for an omnipotent God see ST, Ia. 25.3.

7. For a concise discussion of the issues surrounding compatibilism, see D J O'Connor's Free Will, MacMillan, London 1979. See also A Flew's 'Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom', in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, SMC, London, 1955, for a case which like Mackie's, asks why God did not create beings such that they would freely always choose the good, given that he could.

8. The discussion of Kant is fairly complex, and not one we need to investigate here. Mackie is referring to the third section of Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals (Kant's Theory of Ethics, trans. Abbot: Longman's, London, 1927), when he argues: "Kant thinks that a will is subject to alien causes if and only if it chooses or it acts as it does because of *inducements* of some kind - desired ends, temptations, threats, rewards, and so on - whereas it is not subject to alien causes if it chooses simply in accordance with its own rational ideal of the universal law or of humanity (or rational nature generally), as an end in itself. But though Kant himself thought he was asserting the contra-causal freedom of some human actions, what he says fails to give any substance to this view. The real distinction he draws is between *alien* causes and the *autonomous* operation of the rational will. But this is entirely compatible with the two suppositions, that there are antecedent sufficient causes of a certain agent's having a rational will with a certain strength, and that what such a rational will does on any occasion, how it responds to its circumstances and struggles against contrary inclinations, depends causally on its character and its strength. Autonomy as contrasted with heteronomy is completely distinct from contra causal freedom as contrasted with having had a causal history. Though Kant meant to assert both, he succeeded in describing only the former... In a later work, the Metaphysic of Morals, he recognized this distinction. Here he contrasted *Wille*, the good, autonomous, will; with *Willkur*, the will in the ordinary sense, the faculty of making choices, some right, some wrong, and ascribed contra-causal freedom only to the latter. But this emphasizes rather than resolves our present difficulty. The value of freedom has been located in the autonomy, the self-legislative character, of the *Wille*..." (The Miracle of Theism p170-171).

9. Ahern concludes his argument here as follows: "If God exists, there exists an omniscient being who knows everything that it is logically possible for unlimited power to achieve and how to achieve it; an omnipotent being exists which has unlimited power; a wholly good being exists which will bring about whatever omnipotence can bring about to justify evil. A theist may rightly point out the consistency of this position. It suggests, however, a new reason why it may not be possible to go far in solving the concrete problems [that is, the problem of the evil that actually occurs]. We have very imperfect knowledge of the logically impossible. Consequently, what God, if he exists, is able and intends to achieve through the world and its evil may not be apparent to us in most cases of evil./ Accordingly, the only positive answer that can now be given to the concrete problems is an indirect one, i.e. the answer that all actual evil is justified if God exists" (Problem of Evil, p74-5).

CHAPTER TWO:

1. H J McCloskey makes a good case against the metaphorical understanding of such terms: "... it is difficult to see how assertions about God's power and knowledge could be construed as being simply metaphorical and not as literal statements. Indeed, it is difficult to see what sort of metaphorical utterance would be possible here, and how it could be cashed in literal language. It necessarily would have to be cashed in terms of God not being literally all-powerful and all-knowing. Yet if that is so, those who hold this view of God would have no reason for concern about the traditional problem of evil for they would have as their God a finite being, since the only alternative to a being that is

literally omnipotent is one who is limited in power... If God is good qua moral, rational being, he cannot be called good simply metaphorically... In brief, the attempt to explain assertions about God in respect of his power, knowledge, and goodness as metaphors and not as literal truths, cannot succeed, but the attempts to explain such assertions in this way indicates that theists who hold this view are committed to a view of God as a being finite and limited" (God and Evil p54).

On analogy, Swinburne has argued convincingly that the more we resort to reductions in semantic rules for particular words, the more difficult it becomes to apply criteria of coherence or incoherence to statements in which they appear. So: "In giving words analogical meanings... although I have loosened up the meanings of those words, I have not emptied them of meaning. There are still statable and precise rules for their use. For that reason information is still conveyed by the use of the words although not as much as would have been conveyed if the words had been used in the normal senses. Many words which the theist uses, he may claim, are used in perfectly ordinary senses - all conjunctions such as 'if' and 'then', and topic-neutral words such as 'necessarily' and 'state of affairs', and also 'good'. For the application of these words there are the same syntactic rules and the same standard examples. the other words I have been discussing have had their meaning loosened, but the loosening-up is not too great, since most of the syntactic rules remain" (The Coherence of Theism, p278).

The kind of word theists use analogically when talking of God, is 'person'. Swinburne argues for instance, that: "...in claiming that God is necessarily the kind of person which he is, the theist claims that God is a necessarily eternal being. Being what he is, he cannot cease to be. Clearly, only with a stretched sense of 'person' can the theist coherently make that claim. But to make this claim is also to make a kind of claim which is not altogether remote from mundane thinking" op.cit., p276).

2. On the paradox of the stone see the following work, which has set the framework for much of the discussion by writers such as Swinburne and Mackie: J L Mackie, 'Evil and Omnipotence', Mind, 1955, p209-212; G Keene's 'A Simpler Solution to the Paradox of Omnipotence', Mind, 1960, 69, p74ff; B Mayo, 'Mr Keene on Omnipotence', Mind, 1961, 70, p249ff; G Mavrodes, 'Some Puzzles Concerning Omnipotence', Philosophical Review, 1963, 72, p221-3; A Plantinga, 'Verificationism and Other Atheologica', God and Other Minds, p168-173; J Cowan, 'The Paradox of Omnipotence', Analysis, 1965, 25, p102-8; C Savage, 'The Paradox of the Stone', Philosophical Review, 1967, 76, p74-9; in less detail, M Ahern, 'Terms', The Problem of Evil, p14-15.

In Swinburne's discussion, he notes two positions preliminary to developing his own. Mayo, Mavrodes, and Plantinga represent the first (see references above): "Let us take Mavrodes. He argues that God is omnipotent, presumably by definition. But 'on the assumption that God is omnipotent, the phrase "a stone is too heavy for God to lift" becomes self-contradictory' [Mavrodes p222]. Since it is no objection to the omnipotence of a being that he cannot do self-contradictory things, it is no objection to his omnipotence that he cannot do this self-contradictory thing" (CT p153).

Swinburne follows Savage in arguing: "... the point of the paradox is to show that the concept of omnipotence is incoherent. It is therefore

begging the question to assume that a certain person, if he exists, has that property, whether by definition or not" (CT p154). Of Savage's solution: "Wade Savage claims that 'P cannot create a stone which P cannot lift' does not entail that 'there is at least one task which P cannot perform'. It might seem that it does. But, it is claimed, this illusion vanishes on analysis. 'P cannot create stone which P cannot lift' can only mean 'If P can create a stone, P can lift it'. It is obvious that the latter statement does not entail that P is limited in power' (CT *ibid* - Savage, p77). Swinburne then rejects it [I omit the details of the argument]. For if we say that if P can create a stone, then P can subsequently lift it, then this ultimately means that "P cannot give to any stone which he creates the power to resist subsequent lifting by P: indeed, that if P does create a stone, he cannot then or thereafter limit his stone-lifting powers so as not to be able to lift that stone, and... he cannot commit suicide. So there is a task which P cannot perform - to make a stone to which he gives the power to resist subsequent lifting by himself. That is clearly a task which many ordinary beings can perform" (CT p155).

Swinburne follows with a detailed discussion, the kind of thing with which, arguably, Moltmann will need to become familiar if his descriptions of theism and its options are not to be unbalanced. The following is important: "We suppose that P is able to bring about the existence of a stone endowed with such properties that he cannot subsequently cause it to rise. What then is the state of affairs which P is unable to bring about? The rising of the stone 'in question'. But this needs filling out - the stone needs to be described more fully. Of which stone is P unable to bring about the rising? 'A stone too heavy for P to bring about its rising'? But the rising of that stone is a state of affairs of which the description entails that P did not bring it about after t. 'The next stone created by P'? There is no reason to suppose that P will create any more stones, but if he does, there is no reason to suppose that P will be unable to make them rise. 'The stone created by P which is too heavy for P to bring about its rising'? There is no reason to suppose that P will bring about the existence of such a stone; that he can does not entail that he will... Any attempt to describe the state of affairs which P is allegedly unable to bring about will either lead to the description of a state which there is no reason to suppose P unable to bring about, or to a description of a state which entails that he did not bring it about" (CT p157).

3. For a reconciliation of an orthodox theists view of God with Moltmann's theology of the crucified God, see D G Attfield's, 'Can God be Crucified', *SJT*, 30, p47-57.

4. See The Coherence of Theism, p162ff.

5. See M Ahern, The Problem of Evil, p16-18; H J McCloskey, God and Evil, p46-47; J Hick, Evil and the God of Love, p12-18 - gives the following definition which could be argued to be rather open-ended - what if a particular world was created by satanic forces? Thus: "We have seen that from our human point of view, unaided by religious faith, the good is that which we welcome, and the bad that which we would shun. The analogous theological definition will be in terms of the divine purpose for the created world. Whatever tends to promote the attainment of that purpose will be good and whatever tends to thwart it will be bad" (*op.cit.*, p15). As I am suggesting that Christian belief involves ideas such that God is perfectly just, wholly good, and so on, and that this

means there cannot be divine permittance of ultimate injustices, I would agree with Hick insofar that anything that actually results in such injustice is certainly bad. By this stage, one would reasonably doubt that the world had been created by a perfectly just and wholly good God (I would agree that there could also be acts and events which would not amount to ultimate injustices, but which would go against what God desires most for the world). See also Plantinga's 'The Problem of Evil', God and Other Minds, p115ff.

6. It is interesting that Hick and Ahern are of course in agreement here, but that after offering a summary of Hick's position, Ahern's position, described earlier, leads him to argue as follows: "This theory shares with every theory which attempts to justify all evil, the disadvantage that there is no way of knowing whether it is true. Even when Christian belief is taken into account, it cannot be shown with certainty what God's exact plan for the whole world may be. Accordingly, Hick cannot show that he has correctly outlined it. It is, of course, impossible to verify the success of any suggested plan" (Ahern, PE, p64). Again, this suggests difficulty for Christians who want to make the world intelligible as the world of a wholly good God - a world where many suffer terribly, and understandably seek intelligibility (of a kind which would convert their suffering from brute experience with no apparent possible justification, to a component of a worthwhile world and existence). And how can we ever know whether we meet a cunning god, or God, at the eschaton?

CHAPTER THREE:

1. See R Swinburne's The Coherence of Theism for a major philosophical discussion of what is involved in the traditional attributes. H J McCloskey also looks in great detail at theist attributes, and the consequences of compromise, in chapters four and five of his God and Evil.

2. Richard Bauckham discusses Dostoyevsky's thinking in his article on Moltmann and theodicy in Modern Theology. 'Theodicy from Ivan Karamazov to Moltmann', 4:1, 1987. I believe that his conclusions on both Ivan and Moltmann can be challenged. He starts by stating that "Moltmann's response (not solution) to the problem of suffering has two considerable merits, which are not both to be found in many other recent treatments of theodicy. In the first place, he responds to the problem of suffering in the particular shape which it has assumed in the modern period, and secondly, he responds to it from the resources offered by the christological centre of historic Christian faith, i.e., from an incarnational understanding of the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ". One thing that should be noted here, is that a response to what is described as a "characteristically modern perception of the world", is one which should be judged on whether its arguments are good arguments vis a vis the problem of evil, rather than contemporary ones.

I shall not reiterate the progress of The Brothers Karamazov, Book Five, chapters three to five in detail. Ivan rejects classical theodicy with its aim of justifying evil: "Surely the reason for my suffering was not that I as well as my evil deeds and sufferings may serve as manure for some future harmony for someone else. I want to see with my own eyes the lion lie down with the lion and the murdered man rise up and embrace his murderer. I want to be there when everyone suddenly finds out what it has

all been for. All religions on earth are based on this desire, and I am a believer" (BK, Penguin, 1982, p285-6).

Ivan continues: "But then there are the children, and what am I to do with them? That is the question I cannot answer... Listen: if all have to suffer so as to buy eternal harmony by their suffering, what have the children to do with it - tell me please? It is entirely incomprehensible why they, too, should have to suffer and why they should have to buy harmony by their sufferings. Why should they, too, be used as dung for someone's future harmony? ... I understand, of course, what a cataclysm of the universe it will be when everything in heaven and on earth blends in one hymn of praise... Then, indeed, the mother will embrace the torturer who had her child torn to pieces by his dogs, and all three will cry aloud: 'Thou art just, O Lord!', and everything will be explained. But there's the rub: for it is that I cannot accept" (ibid).

Bauckham discusses Dostoyevsky's position, and concludes: "Though Ivan, ironically, for the sake of argument, accepts the existence of the God of classical theodicy, he finds this God's world morally unacceptable... therefore he rebels... In the name of justice, he rebels against the God who can only be justified by calling injustice just" (op.cit p85). This is a position Bauckham himself seems to accept. Moving to a discussion of Camus, Bauckham's main point is to highlight that although Ivan rebels for the positive reason of humanity and justice, the sentiment that if God and immortality are no longer believed in, then 'everything would be permitted' (BK p77), signals the growth of nihilism, and the age of justification of suffering for human ends. Bauckham argues: "What is needed is a basis for Ivan's protest against innocent and senseless suffering, a basis for rejecting any justification of such suffering, whether as theodicy or as anthropodicy. How can Ivan's protest be maintained and not lapse into the cynical terror of the Grand Inquisitor?" (ibid).

What he does not seem to realise is that such a prominent contributor to the theodicy debate as J L Mackie has argued that we can make our own humanist ethics, and that it is possible to do so without lapsing into "cynical terror". Mackie wrote of H Küng's ethical argument in Does God Exist: "He concedes... that 'There is in fact what Nietzsche called a 'genealogy of morals'' - that is, that concrete ethical systems have been developed by a socio-historical process - and that today we have to 'work out "on earth" discriminating solutions for all the difficult problems. We are responsible for our morality'" (MT, p246, citing Küng, p469). Mackie continues: "All this is strikingly similar to the main theme of my Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong [CH.1] - and, what is more important, it is in itself an adequate reply to nihilism about value" (MT, p246). Then: "With comic condescension, Küng allows that 'On the basis of fundamental trust, even an atheist can lead a genuinely human, that is, humane, and in this sense moral, life', and that 'Even atheists and agnostics are not necessarily nihilists, but can be humanists and moralists'" (MT, p247, Küng, p476). Mackie then criticises Küng's "crucial step in the direction of theism". In a move which would seem to match Bauckham's thinking, Küng wrote: "It must now be obvious that the fundamental trust in the identity, meaningfulness and value of reality, which is the presupposition of human science and autonomous ethics, is justified in the last resort only if reality itself - of which man is also a part - is not groundless, unsupported and aimless" (Küng, p476).

Bauckham next looks at E Wiesel's loss of faith (op.cit., p86ff: ref. to Wiesel's Night, New York, 1960). The key point is, nevertheless, that: "Wiesel recognizes... that God stands in a dialectical relationship to the problem of suffering. God is not only the authority over history to whom the rebel directs his accusation; he also represents and so sustains the human values which alone keep human beings human in the face of unacceptable suffering" (op.cit., p86). Here Bauckham seems to be moving towards the position of Rolf Gruner in his article "The Elimination of the Argument from Evil" Theology, 83, 1980, p418ff), where it is seen as somehow paradoxical that religion relies on that which has been argued to be incompatible with its being true. As Mackie points out, the paradox lies "squarely within theism" (Miracle of Theism, p157), and if Bauckham does accept that no theodicy is possible, then I would argue that this kind of Christian position is incoherent.

Before looking at Moltmann himself, Bauckham cites Mark 15:34, 37. He asks what can the significance of this be for our thinking on the deaths of innocent sufferers? Referring to Camus in Man in Revolt (see his references), Bauckham points to the problem of accepting Jesus as either human victim, or divine sanctification of suffering. For "If the cross is divested of deity, Jesus is just one more victim, protesting his innocence against divine injustice. If the cross is invested with deity, it becomes the most effective, but also the most objectionable theodicy, justifying suffering and silencing protest" (op.cit., p89). All in all, Bauckham succeeds in raising major problems for the Christian who wants to make sense of what it means to say that God is wholly good and perfectly just, given the world there is. How does he see Moltmann overcoming an apparently unsustainable situation?

Bauckham first identifies two requirements which a contemporary response to the problem of evil must meet. It must not justify innocent and involuntary suffering. And: "If it is not to justify suffering, it must, on the contrary, help to maintain the protest against suffering, and convert it into an initiative for overcoming suffering" (op.cit., p89). In Moltmann's theology, Bauckham finds these requirements met, not, I would argue, that this satisfactorily responds to the core issues of the problem of evil: "the dialectic of cross and resurrection creates a dialectical concept of divine promise. The God of promise redeems the world by contradicting it and transcending the contradiction, i.e. he confronts the world in its godlessness and godforsakenness with the promise of righteousness and divine presence, and he transcends the contradiction by recreating the world to accord with the promise... The promise sets believers in contradiction to the state of the world in which they live. By promising a quite different reality it gives them a critical distance from reality as it is, and they begin to suffer the contradiction between the two, as the promise exposes the lack of righteousness and freedom in the world around them (TH p118-19, 222)" (op.cit., p90-91).

Bauckham continues: "As a response to the problem of suffering, therefore, Moltmann is proposing an eschatological theodicy, *not* in the sense that suffering will prove justified... but in the sense that God will finally *overcome* all suffering... The divine promise gives no explanation of suffering, but hope for liberation from suffering... By identifying the divine purpose not with what reality is but with what it will be - and under the impact of the promise, can to some extent begin to be - Moltmann in effect aligns the divine purpose with Ivan's protest against the unacceptable face of present reality" (ibid).

The case proceeds with Bauckham emphasising that the special contribution of The Crucified God is to show how God voluntarily suffers with us. Thus: "The cross and resurrection represent the opposition between a reality which does not correspond to God, the world subject to sin, suffering and death, and a reality which does correspond to God, a new creation indwelt by God's presence and reflecting his glory... incarnational Christology means that this dialectic is internal to God's own experience... He is present in his own contradiction - the godlessness and godforsakenness of the cross - because in his love he embraces the reality which does not correspond to him" (op.cit., p92).

Thus: "A most important point in this argument for our purpose is that on identifying with the godforsaken the crucified God does not sanction their suffering as part of his purpose... God's purpose is liberation from suffering, promised in the resurrection, where God is present in reality corresponding to him. On the cross he embraces the godforsaken reality which precisely does not correspond to him" (ibid). Bauckham concludes his presentation by referring back to his three texts. He feels Moltmann's position answers the needs they make clear. In relation to the alternatives of the innocent victim or the sanctifying divine sufferer, Bauckham sees that Moltmann presents us with an incarnate God who protests on behalf of innocent sufferers. On Wiesel's experience of the boy on the gallows, Moltmann can see God there too: "Hence, in Auschwitz as on the cross, God is present in his own contradiction" (op.cit., p95). Of Ivan's protest, there is a lengthier discussion.

First, "God is no longer just the heavenly authority whom he accuses, but also the one who shares his suffering in love and protests with him against his suffering in love" (ibid). Second, "the crucified God stands in a dialectical relation to the problem of suffering. He is not only in some sense responsible for the world which arouses our moral outrage... he also endorses that protest against himself. This dialectic of divine responsibility and protest must remain an open dialectic to be resolved only at the eschaton when suffering is overcome... Meantime, God's solidarity with the suffering provides a ground for that longing for divine righteousness from which the protest arises, keeps it from lapsing into nihilism" (ibid).

In Bauckham's analysis, I think we find the problem clearly set out, rather than any evidence of its being overcome. Bauckham does not explore just exactly what is involved in the traditional problem, though he emphasises the divine responsibility and love which has meant that the extreme contradiction between the world which exists, and that which will exist, between reality and God's nature, has been seen as generating a problem of radical incompatibility. To say that a person responsible for setting up conditions and possibilities for great and unjustifiable suffering, can be affirmed as unquestionably loving and just, when they immolate themselves and rally us to condemn and revile the situation which they set up, is not a move which resolves any of the traditional problems. As to the argument on nihilism, it is interesting that some of the most careful critique of theodicy moves and of Christian theism, comes from a well known atheist moralist. J L Mackie, among others, did not need to affirm God, in order to see that there were major moral issues at the core of the theodicy question: issues which cannot be bypassed in the way Bauckham seems to suggest, and which I believe will lead one to see that saying there is suffering which is ultimately unjustifiable, is not a move that a person can make, if they wish to say that the creator of the world is wholly good and perfectly just.

3. Again, see Attwood: 'Can God be Crucified', SJT, 30, p47-57

4. Grace Jantzen makes a number of interesting observations on Moltmann and the problem of evil (Kings Theological Review, 5, 1982, p1-7). The first half of the article deals with Camus on suffering and atheism. Jantzen states: "The most impressive feature of Moltmann's thought, in my view, is his refusal to shirk the horrendous facts of human suffering... and his effort not to pander cheap hope as an antidote to it. Instead, he meets the protest atheists more than half way, accepting the legitimacy of their cry for authenticity and their struggle against suffering, and offering them the despair of Jesus as the grounds for a costly hope..." (op.cit., p4).

However, Jantzen, rightly in my view, is troubled by the fact that God has permitted so much suffering in the first instance: "A God who permits moral enormities is a God who, even if he exists, makes the only possible response that of Ivan Karamazov - wanting to 'hand back his ticket.' Now if Moltmann is right, then what he has shown is that God does not sit in aloof silence from the suffering of this world. God himself becomes incarnate and suffers with us. Jesus suffers death, despair, and god-forsakenness on the cross, and the Father takes the suffering into himself in his grief and anguish at the anguish of the Son... This in itself [would be a great deal]... Yet in the end it leaves us with the main problem still unanswered: why does God permit the suffering in the first place? If he is struggling with us in it, then he is not the monstrous deity which we would have to renounce in the name of decency; but this is so only if he is doing all he can against evil. Yet evil continues. Does this mean that God himself is powerless to stop it? If so, that requires a revision of the concept of God of a magnitude which Moltmann has not anticipated, and which undermines the possibility of hope. If not, if God could prevent evil but does not do so, then are we not back with the protest atheists? 'The only excuse' for that sort of half-heartedly struggling God would be 'that he does not exist'" (op.cit., p5).

Jantzen re-states the problem: "... if God really is doing all he can, and he is omnipotent, then why does evil remain? The fundamental problem for a protest atheist is how an omnipotent God who allows such a world can be believed in; and unless Moltmann is willing to sacrifice the doctrine of omnipotence, he has not provided an answer to this problem" (ibid). However, I do not agree that the problem is alive only if we retain the doctrine of omnipotence. It might be that there is a wholly good and just God with less than the power to do all that it is logically possible to do: this God would not be wholly good if a world was created without pre-conditions, which was a world of unjust suffering arguably incompatible with what we would expect of a God who is actually wholly good. Whilst the traditional problem rests on a theism which has God being wholly good and omnipotent, we can take Moltmann's attack on omnipotence into account, and still see that the fundamental belief in God's moral perfection precludes accepting that there can be compatibility between an ultimately unjustifiable world, and the wholly good God of Christian belief.

5. At this point we can look at another figure who has taken up what amounts to this view of the theodicy question. Kenneth Surin holds that Auschwitz, and many other evils cannot be justified, fitted into any theodicy; that to do so would be to ignore the "ethical irrationality" of the world which "subverts all comprehensive schemes that purport to

explain occurrences of evil in terms of what God is said to 'permit'" (Surin, Theology and the Problem of Evil, p67). Further, post-Leibnizian theodicy is heavily criticised for being an "essentially rational or *theoretical* enterprise" (op.cit., p13). One problem here, is that if Surin condemns efforts to detect what amounts to moral intelligibility in the world, any concept of what it would mean to say that this a good and worthwhile world would also have to be abandoned. Paradoxically, Surin argues that this "worldly discipline [theodicy], which finds its authoritative manifestation in common-sense rationalism and empiricism, would cease to be what it essentially is if it were required to posit a subject whose self-definition required her to live and think as a servant of God" (ibid). One concludes then that the theodacist is not thinking as a servant of God. Hick has made the following observation, one that I have previously noted, but which has some bearing on this situation. "Surely if theology is permissible at all, it would be arbitrary to disallow discussion of the topics that come under the rubric of theodicy: creation, the relation of human suffering to the will of God, sin and the fall of man, redemption, heaven and hell. Indeed the objectors are usually theologians who deal *inter alia* with these very topics" (EGL p9). Thus: "Their objection, then is not to the consideration of these themes as such, but, presumably, to a consideration of them that results in theodicy. That is to say, they object to the existence of sin and suffering being thought about in a way that fails to conflict with belief in the divine goodness and power" (ibid).

What Surin at one point thinks about the nature of Christian servant-hood seems to run counter to the implications of references to Spinoza, Hume, and Kant, who are seen as making it "less easy" for theologians to explain evil "in terms of a divinely ordained creative process inherent in nature" (op.cit., p44). Surin argues that theodicy was thus denied a crucial element of its horizon (a contention which is part of his claim that theodicy should realise the extent of its historicity and virtual obsolescence, post-Enlightenment; its reliance upon a transitory epistemological framework). Nevertheless, Surin also appears to support the idea that would seem self-evident to those involved in theodicy, that God does have a recognisable purpose in history. He denies neither that the causal agent in creation was God who is wholly good and perfectly just, and that the total world environment, including human-kind, has its ultimate basis in this free creative act. Given that this is the basis of the problem of evil, it is curious that it is written of theodicy, that it does not: "approach the problem of evil in a way that *demands* that this... be seen as a constituent of an all-encompassing theological... reading of history. [the theodacist]... views history (in its ideal form) very much as an ahistorical and individualistic quest for logically stable notions... Unlike Augustine, the post-Liebnizian theodacist does not feel constrained to understand history as *anything* possessing an intrinsic *thematic* importance, let alone as a history which is the work of the very God who reveals himself in Jesus Christ, and which is a determining element in the subjects self-definition" (op.cit., p13).

6. See R Bauckham's Moltmann, Messianic Theology in the Making, p76-84.

7. Bauckham deals once more with the problem of suffering on p84ff of his Moltmann. The words of Moltmann I have cited, occur in a passage discussed here by Bauckham. He writes: "... God himself was hanging there on the gallows. This is true in 'a real, transferred sense' (CG 278) because of God's act of identification with all abandonment when he hung on the cross of Christ. 'Even Auschwitz is taken up into the grief of the

Father, the surrender of the Son and the power of the Spirit' (CG p278). It would be a mistake to take Moltmann to mean that the formula 'God in Auschwitz and Auschwitz in God' is a solution to the 'problem' of Auschwitz. It is rather like saying that God accepts the problem as his own, suffers its pain, and thereby sustains hope for the overcoming of Auschwitz in 'the resurrection of the dead, the murdered and the gassed' (CG p278)" (Moltmann, p86). Again, I think this misses the core of the question of evil.

Bauckham argues: "He [God] does not, like the god of theism, justify suffering, but he does bear a responsibility for it. There is therefore some real point in the 'metaphysical rebellion' against God which the dying Jesus takes up. The cross does not absolve God of responsibility for suffering. Rather it shows that the one who bears overall responsibility for this suffering world is on the side those who suffer to the extent of sharing their pain and adopting their cause" (Moltmann, p87). In response to Grace Jantzen's questions, of which perhaps the key one is why does God permit suffering if he can prevent it, it is held: "It seems to me that Moltmann thinks we really are and must be left with a residuum of the protest atheist's case... But we need to take account also of what Moltmann says about the power of God's suffering... The cross means that instead of overcoming evil by suppressing evildoers, God overcomes evil by embracing evildoers in his love and bearing the pain" (Moltmann, p88). So far as I can see, this brings us no nearer an answer as to why we should believe a world full of injustice the free creation of a God who is perfectly just and wholly good.

An interesting series of remarks on Moltmann's conception of love appears to offer a hint of justification for the way the world is, but since there is evil which can never be justified, this cannot really answer the vital questions: "In the situation of the crucified God are found the conditions for a life of unconditional love which is vulnerable and open to the other... In the end The Crucified God is about love: the love which empties itself in solidarity with others and identifies with what is alien, which embraces the negative and bears the pain of the negative and overcomes it... The cross is the event of his suffering love by which it embraces the world, so that human life can be truly lived in love and suffering and the struggle against suffering. It does not solve the problem of suffering, but it meets it with the suffering of love" (Moltmann p89-90). However, unless there is clarification as to why it is wrong to ask why is there evil if God permits what he can prevent, and if it is not incoherent to suggest that he permits that which is incompatible with perfect justice and goodness (mass ultimately unjustifiable suffering), this will not do. For it seems that this God who meets the suffering world of ultimate injustices with suffering love may be a deeply flawed and limited being.

8. See J O'Donnel, 'The Doctrine of the Trinity in Recent German Theology, Heythrop Journal, 1982, 23, p164: he discusses briefly the Hegelian implications of the idea that the history of the world can be identified with the history of God.

9. On the use of Isaac Lauria's doctrine of *zimzum*, see Walsh, op.cit., p72, where it is questioned if this theory is logically necessary given the structure of reality; also if there is any good biblical or theological basis.

10. Brian Walsh has a penetrating discussion of various problems in Moltmann's theology of creation: "Theology of Hope and the Doctrine of Creation: and Appraisal of Jurgen Moltmann", The Evangelical Quarterly, 59, 1987, p53-76. A particularly interesting point is the following: "It is significant that Moltmann often refers to Romans 8:19ff. The creature groans in earnest expectation.../ It is therefore most revealing that one finds few references to creation praising God, its Creator in Moltmann's writings. Could it be that Moltmann's doctrine of creation does not emphasize the element of creational praise and thanksgiving because he has ontologically structuralized the directional question of sin, and has thereby fused creation into the fall?" (op.cit., p65).

CHAPTER FOUR:

1. For an account of Bloch's influence see Bauckham's Moltmann, p7ff. Bauckham also has an extensive bibliography on the subject. Christopher Morse also looks at aspects of Bloch's influence: The Logic of Promise in Moltmann's Theology, p12-15, p57-59.

2. Brian Walsh, op.cit., notes this major element of contradiction between righteousness and reality critically: "Undoubtedly, the weight of Moltmann's theology falls on the side of the *novum*, the power of the future and *adventus*. Indeed, in Theology of Hope the primary relation between the future and the present is one of contradiction. Hope reveals present experience as a 'God-forsaken, transient reality that is to be left behind'..../ If contradiction is the primary relation of such a theology to the present, can it ever affirm the present? Moltmann realizes the problem and attempts to address it as early as the Introduction to Theology of Hope. But even here we have an affirmation of the present because the future brings 'to light how open all things are to the *possibilities* in which they can and shall live,' coupled with a warning that 'an acceptance of the present which cannot and will not see the *dying of the present* is an illusion and a frivolity...' An affirmation perhaps, but certainly a guarded one" (Walsh, op.cit., p58: citing Theology of Hope, p32, his italics)..

3. See C Morse, op.cit., p127.

4. Morse, op.cit., p109ff, has a discussion of the implications for thought about God of eschatological ontology.

5. C Morse examines the concept of promise in great detail. Page 27ff of his work noted above, looks at the nature of the divine promise of righteousness. However, the connection with the problem of evil is not made.

6. Walsh makes the following reference to L Gilkey's Reaping the Whirlwind: A Christian Interpretation of History, New York, 1979, p235: "Gilkey argues... that Moltmann's radical view of the *novum* does not even serve his own revolutionary political interests because in any effective revolutionary understanding of history 'the relevant ideal for the future cannot be understood as utterly new, as a *creatio ex nihilo* out of the future, as totally unrelated to the the latent forces or conditions of past and present.' [Walsh continues himself]... And why should the 'new' creation be a new thing out of nothing, even for Moltmann. The only answer we can arrive at is that Moltmann's theology is a form of Spirit idealism that cannot ultimately affirm creation, regardless of how it may try" (op.cit., p59).

7. Morse discusses this with reference to Georg Picht, whose thought influenced Moltmann. Morse holds: "Rather than tailoring the conception of revelation to fit [the Kantian understanding of experience]... Moltmann argues that it is the conception of experience instead which is in need of a theological reformulation.../ the thesis is not that a dynamic or dialectical ontology is to be preferred over a static or a transcendental one (though it may well be), but that revelation must itself be allowed to define the boundaries of experience" (op.cit., p88).

8. B Walsh criticises Moltmann's ambiguity on the subject of the openness and closedness of the world: op.cit., p56-57.

CHAPTER FIVE:

1. For a survey of Moltmann's thinking on theology of hope and political theology, referring in part to Theology of Hope, and Religion, Revolution, and the Future, though not covering the problem of evil in that particular discussion, see R Bauckham's Moltmann: Messianic Theology on the Making, pp22-49.

2. See again B Walsh on the problem of what Moltmann means by openness (with reference to Moltmann's The Experiment Hope, trans. Meeks, Philadelphia, 1975). "Moltmann's position is... ambiguous when he says... that the power of the future 'is not identical with the power of present reality or of the future's open possibility.' This seems to be in direct contradiction with his 'ontology of possibility' discussed a mere ten pages earlier, where he explicitly understands reality in terms of the 'realization of possibility' and calls for 'an ontology of that which is not yet but is possible or stands in possibility'" (op.cit., p57).

3. In the survey article 'Revolution as an Issue in Theology: Jürgen Moltmann', Restoration Quarterly, 1983, 26, p105-120, Ben Wiebe principally discusses Moltmann's attitudes to just war, and violent and non-violent action in revolution. The article does not deal with the ever-present question of evil; how the way Moltmann portrays a radically deficient world ultimately in need of replacement rather than revolution might well exacerbate problems over the compatibility of God and the world.

4. On the image of guilt hurling humanity into transience, and its vagueness, in a brief review article for RS, dealing in part with Hope and Planning, A D Galloway compared Moltmann unfavourably with Pannenberg in one respect: "Pannenberg is more sober and, when he is driven to the use of metaphor, is inclined to take cognisance of the fact and to ask questions about the logical status of what he is saying". More encouragingly, Pannenberg and Moltmann together are considered as setting out "a programme rich with promising suggestions.." RS, 8, pp368-9.

CHAPTER SIX:

1. Bauckham offers an analysis of The Crucified God in chapter three of his Moltmann. However, I disagree with his approach to Moltmann's handling of theodicy.

2. Adorno, Negative Dialektik, 1966. ET, Negative Dialectics, trans. E B Ashton.

3. References to M Horkheimer, Kritische Theorie I, and II, 1968. Bauckham briefly discusses the Horkheimer contribution in Moltmann, p81ff.

4. See Religion, Revolution, and the Future, p159ff.

5. On this particular statement of dialectical principles see also R Bauckham's critical discussion in "Moltmann's Eschatology of the Cross", SJT, 30, p304ff. Bauckham takes the issue up again in his Moltmann, p68-72. He explains the passage in a manner where it is hard to distinguish it from the basis for a theodicy of sorts (it certainly puts responsibility of some kind onto God, and invites a critical analysis of what love which propagates injustices to survive might be): "God is revealed in his opposite because he is love which identifies with what is alien to him and finds his identity in self-emptying solidarity with others... The love of God is most powerful in the helplessness of the cross; the righteousness of God is the righteousness of his unconditional love in justifying those whom the law condemns" (Moltmann, p69-70)

6. For an enthusiastic discussion of Moltmann's theology of contradiction, not however dealing with the implications for the theodicy problem, see J Irish's article 'Moltmann's Theology of Contradiction', Theology Today, 32, p21ff. Irish emphasises God's contradiction of death and misery in a manner which arguably begs the question of why they were permitted a presence in his world: "Moltmann's understanding of the resurrection never operates as a denial or an evasion of death. In his interpretation of the passion narratives, death is seen as irrevocable ending and loss" (op.cit., p24).

7. Moltmann cites the following passage from Beyond Good and Evil, III, 46: "Modern men, with their obtuseness as regards all Christian nomenclature, no longer have the sense for the terribly superlative conception which was implied to an antique taste by the paradox of the formula, 'God on the cross'. Hitherto there had never and nowhere been such boldness in inversion, nor anything at once so dreadful, questioning and questionable as this formula: it promised a transformation of all ancient values" (Hollingdale translation modified - Penguin).

8. J O'Donnel touches on the question of Hegelianism in Moltmann's theology in his article "The Doctrine of the Trinity in Recent German Theology", Heythrop Journal, 1982, 23, p164. He is satisfied with Moltmann's distancing, and doctrine of divine freedom. On the question of divine freedom though, B Walsh is less happy (in his discussion of God's freedom in creation): "Moltmann may be proposing a dialectical understanding of freedom and necessity but the weight of the argument falls heavily on the necessity side of the dialectic" (op.cit., p71 - Walsh is referring to passages in God in Creation [in the section "God's Determination of Himself to be Creator", p82, p85] and The Trinity and the Kingdom of God [in the section "God is Love", p58-9] -).

9. On the question of absence of relationship see George Hunsinger's suggestion that: "In this act what occurs is the absolute separation of being. The separation of being is overcome through the life-giving act of the Spirit. But in this conceptuality (especially in view of Moltmann's polemic against monotheism), the result seems to be three Gods, separate in being, yet united in intention. The unity of the Trinity seems to be volitional, but not ontological" (Hunsinger: "The Crucified God and the Political Theology of Violence, Heythrop Journal, 1973, 14, p278).

10. Abraham Heschel (1907 -). Reference is made to Heschel's, The Prophets, New York, 1962. Bauckham refers to Moltmann's use of Heschel's concept of divine pathos in Moltmann, p104ff.

11. Wiesel continues with the words: "That night the soup tasted of corpses": Night, New York, Avon Books, 1969, p76. R McAfee Brown explores Wiesel's testimony and loss of faith in his book Elie Wiesel: Messenger to All Humanity (Notre Dame, 1983).

On the passage cited by Moltmann A R Eckardt writes: "Part of the famous episode from Night is reproduced... a voice whispers that God is hanging on the gallows. Moltmann offers the response, 'Any other answer would be blasphemy. There cannot be any other *Christian* answer to the question of this torment' [Eckardt's emphasis]. But why has the word 'Christian' been inserted here? The sufferer was a Jew. Further, the voice giving the answer is that of a Jew. However, a much more shattering consideration is involved: It may be asked why the section, 'The fullness of life in the trinitarian history of God,' is given a location immediately after the story from Night...? An element of 'blasphemy' appears, however unintended this may be" (A R Eckardt, "Jurgen Moltmann, the Jewish People, and the Holocaust", Journal of the American Academy of Religion, 1976, 44, p683).

12. J Miguez Bonino makes a number of remarks on these vicious circles: Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age, London, SPCK, 1975. Although not concerned with Moltmann's pessimistic view of liberation possibilities this side of the new creation, or with the question of evil, the criticism is directed at the generally rather vague way in which human existence and suffering is analysed and described in Moltmann's theology, a feature which causes problems for detailed discussion of the theodicy problem. Bonino refers to Moltmann's understanding that:

"we will find God's action *in* the concrete and the historical. But, if this is so, should we also not recognize that it is impossible to reflect on a political theology of the cross without resorting to a historical and concrete way of understanding that 'sacrament' [history]? Can we remain satisfied with a general description of 'demonic circles of death,' without trying to understand them in their unity, their roots, their dynamics, i.e., without giving a coherent socio-analytical account of this manifold oppression? Are we not taking lightly the stark historical reality of the cross when we satisfy ourselves with an impressionistic description of man's alienation and misery? In other words, it seems that, if theology means to take history seriously, it must incorporate - with all necessary caveats - a coherent and all-embracing method of sociopolitical analysis. Moltmann does not seem to be conscious of this need" (op.cit., p147).

CHAPTER SEVEN:

1. Bauckham offers a critical survey of Moltmann's Trinitarian thinking up to and including The Church in the Power of the Spirit, in his book Moltmann, chapter four.

2. For instance, Bushnell (1802-76: an American and Congregationalist) writes: "In what is called His vicarious sacrifice, Christ, as we have seen, simply fulfills what belongs universally to love... Vicarious sacrifice then will not be a point where He is distinguished from his followers, but the very life to which he restores them, in restoring them

to God" (op.cit., p66). And: "What is the sacrifice that must not be vicarious sacrifice, but a virtue that has even lost connection with Christian ideas? It is mere self-abnegation, a loss made for the simple sake of losing, and no such practical loss as love encounters, in gaining or serving an enemy... Sacrifice out of love, or because a full heart naturally and freely takes on itself the burdens and woes of others, has a positive character, and is itself the most intensely positive exercise that can be conceived" (op.cit., p70).

3. But what question precisely is this? Not, I think, that which is debated 'conventionally'. If it were, the simple promise that things will be compatible or expressive of God's perfect righteousness in the future, would not suffice as a response.

4. Bauckham writes on D Sölle's idea (Suffering, London, 1975), that Moltmann's Father is the God of theism: "'the ruling, omnipotent Father' [Suffering p26-7] who deliberately causes the suffering and death of Christ. He is therefore identified, not with the victims, but with their executioners . In reply it must be said that this is plainly not Moltmann's intention. The Father's surrender of the Son to death is an act of suffering love for the world... The cross is not just the Son's but God's act of loving solidarity with the godless and the godforsaken, in which the Son suffers the pain of identification with the godforsaken and the Father suffers his Son's identification with their fate. The cross shows not just the crucified Son, but the trinitarian God not to be the god of theism who presides invulnerably over a suffering world" (Bauckham, Moltmann, p86-7). However, by shifting attention from the Father and the Son as individuals as it were, to the trinitarian God, this only emphasises difficulties in understanding the nature of God's love and justice. Do we wish to share in the reality of this arguably bizarre family concept of love?

CHAPTER EIGHT:

1. For a critique of Moltmann's theology of creation see Walsh, op.cit.
2. Barth's position seems to me to be an attempt to place fundamental evil outside of God's intent (CD, III/3, p304: "Here we can see what nothingness is... Here we can see that it is an antithesis not only to God's whole creation but to the Creator Himself. What challenged Him and provoked His wrath, what made Him come forth as the Judge, and what made Him yield to nothingness in order to overcome it, was obviously nothing that He Himself had chosen, willed or done"), failing though to answer the question of responsibility (op.cit., p302: "... it is in opposition primarily and supremely to God Himself, and therefore necessarily and irrevocably to all His works and creation. Yet God Himself comprehends, envisages and controls it"). However, whilst some of the questions we may want to ask of Barth are similar to those we need to ask of Moltmann, there is a great difference in their positions.

Barth affirms that the shadow-side is good: "It is true that in creaturely existence, and especially in the existence of man, there are hours, days and years both bright and dark, success and failure, laughter and tears, youth and age, gain and loss, birth and sooner or later its inevitable corollary, death. It is true that individual creatures and men experience these things in most unequal measure, their lots being assigned by a justice which is curious or very much concealed. Yet it is irrefutable that creation and creature are good" (op.cit., p297: by

itself this can be seen as a fairly comprehensive acceptance of all kinds of human suffering and misfortune. Barth does not make clear what can be attributed specifically to the shadow-side, or to the effect of *das Nichtige*). He also proclaims that: "As God is Lord on the left hand as well, He is the basis and Lord of nothingness too [*das Nichtige* being referred to here]. Consequently it is not adventitious. It is not a second God, nor self-created. It has no power save that which is allowed by God... Even on His left hand the activity of God is not in vain. He does not act for nothing. His rejection, opposition, negation and dismissal are powerful and effective like all His works because they, too, are grounded in Himself, in the freedom and wisdom of his election" (op.cit., p351-2). I do not find any evidence that Barth thinks that even with the chaos contributed by *das Nichtige*, creation is a realm of ultimate, irresolvable injustice in the sense that Moltmann is willing to accept. Therefore, whilst questions of divine responsibility and power are raised, Barth avoids the problem of claiming that the consequences of God's action on the left hand run to such things as permanent injustices on a massive scale.

3. As I have noted, Walsh calls into question the need for this model of creation, op.cit.

4. A startling contrast with Moltmann's theology of the deficiency of world reality comes in Gerard Manley Hopkins well known poem "God's Grandeur" (The New Oxford Book of English Verse, London, 1975):

THE world is charged with the grandeur of God.
It will flame out, like shining from shook foil;
It gathers to a greatness, like the ooze of oil
Crushed. Why do men then now not reck his rod?
Generations have trod, have trod, have trod;
And all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil;
And wears man's smudge and shares man's smell: the soil
Is bare now, nor can foot feel, being shod.

And for all this, nature is never spent;
There lives the dearest freshness deep down things;
And though the last lights off the black West went
Oh morning, at the brown brink eastward springs -
Because the Holy Ghost over the bent
World broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.

5. The following extracts from S J Gould's Wonderful Life: The Burgess Shale and the Nature of History, represent a challenging view of our status in the universe. Moltmann is not alone in taking an optimistic view of evolution as encouraging ever greater possibilities for diversity and expressing a divine purposiveness in what comes to be. By contrast, Gould's appraisal is based on a new emphasis on contingency. The Burgess Shale has provided glimpses of complex creatures of the Cambrian life-explosion, most of which represent 'rational' designs no longer with us even in variagated forms. This is argued to be the consequence of events such as sudden environmental change - rather than of inevitable displacement by 'higher' types. :

"In its conventional interpretation, the cone of diversity propagates an interesting conflation of meanings. The horizontal dimension shows diversity - fishes plus insects plus snails plus starfishes at the top take up much more lateral room than just flatworms at the bottom. But

what does the vertical dimension represent? In a literal reading, up and down should record only younger and older in geological time: organisms at the neck of the funnel are ancient; those at the lip recent. But we also read upward movement as simple to complex, or primitive to advanced. *Placement in time is conflated with judgement of worth*" (op.cit., p39).

According to Gould, the reality is that: "Life is a copiously branching bush, continually pruned by the grim reaper of extinction, not a ladder of predictable progress..." (p35). And: "If mammals had arisen late and helped to drive dinosaurs to their doom, then we could legitimately propose a scenario of expected progress. But dinosaurs remained dominant and probably became extinct only as a quirky result of the most unpredictable of all events - a mass dying triggered by extra-terrestrial impact. If dinosaurs had not died in this event, they would probably still dominate the domain of large-bodied vertebrates... and mammals would still be small creatures in the interstices of their world" (p318).

Thus: "we are an improbable and fragile entity, fortunately succesful after precarious beginnings as a small population in Africa, not the predictable result of a global tendency. We are a thing, an item of history, not an embodiment of general principles... Run the tape again, and let the tiny twig of *Homo sapiens* expire in Africa. Other hominids may have stood on the threshold of what we know as human possibilities, but many sensible scenarios would never generate our level of mentality. Run the tape again, and this time *Neanderthal* perishes in Europe and *Homo erectus* in Asia (as they did in our world). The sole surviving human stock, *Homo erectus* in Africa, stumbles along for a while, even prospers, but does not speciate, and therefore remains stable. A mutated virus then wipes *Homo erectus* out, or a change in climate reconverts Africa into inhospitable forest. One little twig on the mammalian branch, a lineage with interesting possibilities that were never realized, joins the vast majority of species in extinction" (p319).

CHAPTER NINE:

1. 'Foundationalism'. For an account of what is involved in the 'foundationalist' position see the critique by Alvin Plantinga, "Is Belief in God Rational": C F Delaney Ed., Rationality and Religious Belief, Notre Dame, 1979, p7ff.

2. Reference to Plantinga's discussion of proper basicity in "Reason and Belief in God": A Plantinga and N Wolterstorff Ed., Faith and Rationality, Notre Dame, 1983, see p76. The critique of proper basicity begins on p55.

3. On the subject of theology as world picture and language-game, and Phillip's debt to Wittgenstein see for instance chapter five of Phillip's Faith After Foundationalism, p54ff.

4. Bauckham accepts that Moltmann is "indebted" to Hegel. In his Moltmann, p106-110, he writes: "His trinitarian dialectic is certainly Hegelian in structure.... but not necessarily therefore entirely Hegelian in content... The charge which Moltmann is most anxious to deflect is that of making evil necessary for the sake of good..., since it is essential to his approach to theodicy that evil must not be explained and thereby justified. But Moltmann's most extreme statements about the meaning of the cross - as the self-constitution of the Trinity... make this difficult, whether these statements are understood, in the most

Hegelian and perhaps the most obvious reading of The Crucified God, as meaning that in the event the cross God becomes Trinity, or in a less intelligible way as suggesting that the temporal event of the cross constitutes God's trinitarian being from eternity. In either case, godlessness, godforsakenness and death are necessary to the dialectic which constitutes God's trinitarian being, so that either evil is necessary or God's trinitarian being is contingent on unnecessary evil" (Moltmann, p107-8).

I do not think that Bauckham is entirely convinced by his own explanation of how this is not really true of Moltmann's theology. He continues: "Moltmann avoids this dilemma only by retreating from the position, if he really ever intended it, that God is Trinity only through the cross. Instead, he gives the cross a central but not uniquely determinative place in God's trinitarian history. Already in 1973, he raises the possibility that 'the eternal generatio filii' could be the prior condition in God for the *derelictio Jesu* on the cross, so that God's history has a trinitarian origin before the cross, just as it has a trinitarian goal at the *eschaton* (The Future of Creation, London, SCM, 1979, p74-5).

But the problem returns through the back door: "Pursuing this thought enables Moltmann still to maintain a sense in which the cross is constitutive for the trinitarian relationships even, so to speak, retroactively in God's eternity (cf. TKG 161). If God as he has always been in eternity corresponds to God as he is in the event of the cross, then suffering love must characterise the eternal trinitarian relationships in the sense that 'God's essence is from eternity a love which is capable of suffering, ready to sacrifice and to give itself up' [reference to Jewish Monotheism and Christian Trinitarian Doctrine, Philadelphia, 1981, p54, and Diskussion über Jürgen Moltmanns Buch 'Der gekreuzigte Gott', Munich, 1979, p179-80]. In this sense, the Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world... So far, if Moltmann means that God is such that, if and when his love is contradicted, he will suffer, the contingency of evil is preserved. But when he later puts it more strongly - that 'the Son's sacrifice of boundless love on Golgotha is from eternity already included in the exchange of the essential, the consubstantial love which constitutes the divine life of the Trinity' (TKG 168), so that 'the pain of the cross determines the inner life of the triune God from eternity to eternity' (TKG 161) - we seem to be back with the original problem. If this does not make evil necessary, the contingent evil not only affects God in the course of his trinitarian history (cf. Future of Creation 77), but essentially determines his inner life from eternity. This conclusion results from the temptation, which Moltmann from the Crucified God onwards seems unable to resist, to see the cross as the key to the doctrine of God, not only in the sense that it reveals God as the kind of love which is willing to suffer, but in the sense that the actual sufferings of the cross are essential to who God is. This attempt to take God's temporal experience as seriously as possible oddly ends by eternalising it" (Moltmann, p108-9).

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ABBREVIATIONS

- BCFL = Belief, Change and Forms of Life.
- BMEP = Bobbs-Merril Educational Publishing.
- BK = Brothers Karamazov.
- CG = The Crucified God.
- CT = The Coherence of Theism.
- CUP = Cambridge University Press.
- EGL = Evil and the God of Love.
- FAF = Faith After Foundationalism.
- FC = Future of Creation.
- GC = God in Creation.
- GS = Gott in der Schöpfung.
- HP = Hope and Planning.
- GAW = God and the World.
- GAOM = God and Other Minds.

JAAR = Journal of the American Academy of Religion.
Moltmann = Moltmann - Messianic Theology in the Making.
MT = The Miracle of Theism.
OUP = Oxford University Press.
PE = The Problem of Evil.
RKP = Routledge Kegan Paul.
R/RF = Religion, Revolution and the Future.
RS = Religious Studies.
SJT = Scottish Journal of Theology.
SR = Spirit and Reality.
TCPS = The Church in the Power of the Spirit.
T/H = Theology of Hope.
THP = The Hardest Part.
TJ = Theology and Joy.
TKG = The Trinity and the Kingdom of God.
TMOH = The Meaning of History.
TMP = The Mystery of Pain.
TQFE = The Quest for Eternity.
TTSL = The Tragic Sense of Life.
UNDP = University of Notre Dame Press.
VR = Value and Reality.
WANF = Writings of the Anti-Nicene Fathers.

RR = Reason and Religion